

Movements in Time

Artworks from the National Gallery



Chua Mia Tee
Epic Poem of Malaya
1955
Oil on canvas, 112 x 153 cm
Collection of National Gallery Singapore

Movements in Time

Artworks from the National Gallery

A SUITE FOR ORCHESTRA

Kelly Tang

Commissioned by
Foundation for The Arts and Social Enterprise
as the premiere composition for its

MUSIC
COMMISSIONING
SERIES

Foreword

Tonight's concert is special in many ways. *Movements in Time – Artworks from the National Gallery* is the first work from the Music Commissioning Series project by the Foundation for The Arts and Social Enterprise. It features a series of instrumental sections that are inspired by artworks from the National Gallery Singapore.

I was told that Kelly Tang, our 2011 Cultural Medallion recipient, composed the suite shortly after he suffered a stroke, and that the discipline of composing helped in his recovery process. In itself, composing is a demanding and challenging process, but made even more daunting in Kelly's case. As you listen to the music this evening, I hope you will be inspired by Kelly's testimony of determination and tenacity.

The success of our musicians and artists is not achieved in isolation; it is the result of the collective efforts of various stakeholders within our arts ecosystem. Arts groups and intermediaries, such as the Foundation for

The Arts and Social Enterprise, play a crucial role in nurturing and supporting our local talents.

Our arts and heritage are a source of inspiration. And we want everyone to enjoy, benefit and contribute to our arts and heritage. We have been engaging the community since June 2021 to shape Our SG Arts Plan (2023 – 2027) which outlines the direction and priorities of Singapore's arts and culture scene over the next five years. Through these engagements, we received many valuable insights and suggestions on how to take the sector forward which will be considered and incorporated. The National Arts Council will be launching the plan later this year, and we look forward to your continued support for our arts.

The Music Commissioning Series is a good example of such support for the arts. The Series provides a platform for our musicians to create and showcase original works, allowing them to push boundaries



and explore new artistic horizons. But this is not enough. The Series also requires the sustained support of the private sector, as the arts can only flourish with the support from the community. Through the financial support of Patrons, whether individuals or corporates, the arts in Singapore will play its role in sustaining a living, breathing culture, and in the process, forge our evolving sense of identity as individuals and as a people. Our arts scene will always be a work-in-progress, requiring all stakeholders – the government, private sector and arts community – to work closely together.

On this note, I congratulate Michael Tay and The Foundation for its continued efforts to raise the arts above the ordinary. I look forward to more great works coming out of the Music Commissioning Series.

Thank you and enjoy the music.

EDWIN TONG

Minister for Culture, Community and Youth & Second Minister for Law

Why We Do What We Do

Tonight is more than a concert, or fragments of a concert. It is a metaphor for something bigger, something that will have a lasting impact on our journey into Singapore's future.

Anyone living in Singapore is faced with the question of how the country will grow and change. As an island city-state, we will always wonder about the future of Singapore. We have moved a long way from our colonial roots and regional contexts, but we will always have limited physical boundaries. How can we expand the space for our evolution beyond these boundaries?

The arts and our artistes can provide an answer. We may not be able to replicate the 'K-pop' phenomenon, but perhaps we can generate an 'S-sound' that we can project and promote globally.

Singapore artistes are already leaving an imprint in the global arts scene but are they any more than scattered shots into the future? What we need is a whole-of-society approach, working systematically and in concert, to raise the chances of our talents

reaching a wider audience and becoming agencies of soft power for Singapore.

Tonight, The Foundation is showcasing three trajectories towards the future:

- The **Music Commissioning Series**, a 10-year undertaking to generate new works that can be performed beyond Singapore
- The **Prodigy Fund**, a serious attempt to jump-start the lives of young geniuses who may otherwise fall through the cracks
- The **UTOPIA Symphony**, a testament to the Singapore success story. Our ambition is to get it into the repertoires of international orchestras. It has also spawned our ongoing **UTOPIA Reimagined** project.

These three initiatives of The Foundation exemplify our aim to expand Singapore's cultural capital. We want to bring the public and private sectors together to support local artistes.

The Government can only do so much to set the conditions for artistic creation at home. Building up this cultural capital requires three engines – government, the private sector,



and the artistes – all firing together. Hence, the private sector needs to become actively involved in supporting the arts community, providing patronage of the arts as a core part of their DNA.

With the private sector's strength in maximising the use of funds to promote success and their connections to world markets, artistes would have access to a vast network to expand their reach. In turn, the private sector can ride the wave of soft power generated by our artistes.

For the second commission of the Music Commissioning Series, we will refresh our journey of exploration into what makes the 'Singapore sound'. Will it be a tumble of diverse strands of ethnic sounds? Or something greater than the sum of its parts, a higher convergence of sounds that are both rooted in our regional musics and yet affiliated with the global experience? What will it sound like? No one knows but is that not the essence of art creation?

I hope you will join us in our journey.

MICHAEL TAY

Founder

Foundation for The Arts and Social Enterprise

Interview with Kelly Tang

In this interview, we come face-to-face with the composer Kelly Tang for insights to his thoughts and approaches to the writing of *Movements in Time – Artworks from the National Gallery*. The interview is held at a quiet cafeteria, where Kelly Tang meets the interview team of THEO Arts, before he leaves quickly for the next rehearsal.



THEO Arts: When The Foundation approached you with the commission to write this work for them, they made no mention of what it should be, did they? As the entire choice was yours, why did you choose for your opus to be tied to Singapore art?

Kelly Tang: First of all, I think that is a very good query. I wanted the piece to relate to Singaporeans, I wanted to compose something that is worth coming for. I wanted to relay something worthwhile to Singaporeans. I hope they will like the music, that they will like the artworks by Chua Mia Tee and Simryn Gill. The artworks represent values and ideas important for Singaporeans, the music represents and tries to express some of these values in the artworks themselves.

THEO Arts: In your mind, how do music and visual imagery relate? How would you say you have brought these images to create/trigger/inspire the making of musical sounds?

Kelly Tang: Thank you for bringing me to see the artworks at the National Gallery. Let's talk about the artworks – each of them represents a different value. Chua Mia Tee's painting *Epic Poem of Malaya* represents the quality of optimism. The artwork represents certain ideals and passions that people live for – their community and their nation. I thought that was important.

With Han Sai Por's sculpture from her *Extinction series*, it is the idea of 'enigma' and the sense of questioning and discovering something, the sense of not knowing the one thing you want to discover that is a mystery. I see that as a joyful thing.

In the artwork *Bowls* by Eng Tow there is a sense of concentration, peace and calm. It is something that I need and which I feel Singaporeans need also.

And finally there is the idea of joy and celebration in Sarkasi Said Tzee's batik *Voices of the Soul*. Hopefully the music represents joy and feelings of passion.

I thought all the artworks were very evocative. So that photograph by Simryn Gill *Standing Still #28* is particularly of a dilapidated house. I think it is something we all need to confront – being abandoned and useless. Hopefully the music represents what the photograph expresses. The past and the future, the good and the bad are important in coming together so that we see a complete picture of what we are. The contrast in the five movements is that each is very different from the other. Hopefully it keeps the listener interested and not too bored! I hope to make the music interesting, so that people do not fall asleep or try to run out! And hopefully they can remember something of it.

THEO Arts: There is a lot of thought that goes into the work. It is not just what the feeling of the artwork is, and then you write the music; but there's an intellectual element in your approach to all the artworks.

Kelly Tang: I hope that the music ties together all the five artworks. In composing I tried to have a diversity of medium, of paintings, textile, sculpture, photography as well as batik. And if you do notice, I think it was very, very important to represent different backgrounds, gender and ages that each of the artists come from – that diversity is what we celebrate.

THEO Arts: Is there a narrative in this composition, and if so, how does each movement relate to the other?

Kelly Tang: Each movement is separate, but they interact with each other. What connects one movement to another is that they represent different aspects of our psyche – our fears and our aspirations, such as Sarkasi does. So in this sense they are different and yet hopefully the movements complement each other.

The whole composition forms a journey. The first movement talks about the architecture of the National Gallery building, then the listener is moved from one artwork to another. The whole composition is uniquely ours, inspired by the five artworks by Singapore artists at the National Gallery.

THEO Arts: How do you describe your work? 'Classical'?

Kelly Tang: My work tries to be relevant and useful; and tries to represent what people are going through. I try to use every technique to give breath to what the movement is trying to say. Some movements are more avant garde, others more traditional – what is important is what is being expressed, and why it is being expressed. It is a contemporary composition – responding to what is around me, what I have heard before. I feel that music has an important thing to say, and that you must say something.

THEO Arts: I see that you are trying to avoid putting it in a genre?

Kelly Tang: Yes. It tries to be everything at once. Hopefully this music will also appeal to people from elsewhere, from other countries, and people of the future. Hopefully it has meaning for them too. So, if someone has not seen the artwork, we hope they will still be able to appreciate the music. I feel that we cannot force anyone. They may not like it today, but tomorrow is another day.

THEO Arts: What will people take away from the work?

Kelly Tang: Hopefully they will be more adventurous, more confident. That they will be willing to confront the darkness that is within each of us. People will be more proud of who they are, that they will see beyond themselves and they will see the sense of complementing others. That the whole is much bigger than the parts.

THEO Arts: You have told us that the two artworks that speak most strongly to you are the Chua Mia Tee *Epic Poem of Malaya* and Simryn Gill's *Standing Still #28*. For most, the Chua Mia Tee piece really stands out, it is one of the Gallery's highlights. It is also part of our history, and sometimes historical realism is more easily understood than an abstract work.

Kelly Tang: Yes, with Simryn Gill's work, I think that viewers might want to avoid such a photograph because the emptiness reflects the void within the person. I thought that it

is important to point out that hole, in order to lead to other things. All of us have a void, a vacuum, that's what drives us to seek other things. It drives us towards community, towards embracing people who are different from us. The one narrative is that different people are important. They can work together to form something. The sum is more than the parts, like an orchestra it is much, much more than the instruments in it. It is something that stretches what any one person can do.

I must say that before the stroke happened to me in 2020, I would not have thought of these things. These ideas came to me after the stroke. This is the first piece I wrote after the stroke. You cannot have the joy or the celebration without the vacuum and the emptiness as represented by Simryn Gill. You know, in a painting, you cannot have light without darkness.

I felt a sense of relief, this piece was very, very important to me to discover new things. New values as well. So even as I was writing, I was discovering and exploring, learning. A lot of this work was imagined in the quietness of morning walks at MacRitchie Reservoir, for me to understand what's going on in the people around me and to understand what is going on around me in society and the environment.

I think The Foundation trusted me and had faith in me to complete the composition even after the stroke that I had. But because of what happened to me, that shaped my way of thinking. That changed my perspective. So, I thank The Foundation for trusting me. I thank them for having faith in me and believing in me.

Programme

Special Guest Performance by Pianist Mikkel Myer Lee

Ballade No. 3 in A Flat major

24 Preludes, Op. 28 (No. 1, No. 9, No. 11, No. 21, No. 24)

Frédéric Chopin

The Making of the UTOPIA Symphony

From the first commission by Michael Tay of the SINGAPORE Symphony in Moscow, to the international release of the LPO recording, this mini-documentary brings us to the ambition behind the Music Commissioning Series – to commission major works and take them to the international stage

Movements in Time – Artworks from the National Gallery (World Premiere)

- I. Fanfare
- II. The Idealist
- III. Mystery
- IV. Interlude
- V. Contemplation
- VI. Enigma
- VII. Dance

Kelly Tang

*Metropolitan Festival Orchestra
Prof. Chan Tze Law, Conductor*

Composer's Programme Notes

Movements in Time – Artworks from the National Gallery is a suite for orchestra inspired by artworks from National Gallery Singapore. The suite begins with a *Fanfare* reflecting the grandeur of the Gallery's building. A heroic movement follows entitled *The Idealist*, inspired by Chua Mia Tee's painting *Epic Poem of Malaya*. This leads to a *Mystery* scherzo based on Simryn Gill's macabre photograph of a dilapidated building from her *Standing Still* series.

In the *Interlude* that ensues, the oboe and clarinet restate the introductory *Fanfare* theme. This paves the way for the graceful *Contemplation* movement, tracing the gentle contours of Eng Tow's *Bowls*. A sudden storm breaks this peace, which clears when the graceful theme returns.

The audience is then confronted by the probing questions of the *Enigma* movement, inspired by Han Sai Por's organic and alien sculpture from her *Extinction series*. *Movements in Time – Artworks from the National Gallery* closes with a festive *Dance* inspired by Sarkasi Said Tzee's celebratory batik painting *Voices of the Soul*.

Each of these movements can be performed individually or in any combination the performer prefers. *Movements in Time – Artworks from the National Gallery* hopes to attract more concertgoers to view the expressive and evocative art pieces displayed at the National Gallery Singapore.

KELLY TANG



Chua Mia Tee
Epic Poem of Malaya
1955
Oil on canvas, 112 x 153 cm
Collection of National Gallery Singapore

Chua Mia Tee *Epic Poem of Malaya*

Epic Poem of Malaya (1955), by Chua Mia Tee depicts the real and existential drama of growing nationalism in post-war Singapore. A fiery orator passionately holds up his red book, an epic poem entitled *Malaya*. The group of students and workers seated in the dirt around him are captivated by his message, purportedly a call to independence and a 'Malayan Malaya'. Dressed simply in working clothes, the heroes of social realist art movements were often the common man calling for change. In this piece, the rapt listeners may represent an audience that the artist himself intends to address through his art. In the background dark clouds are overhead, but a little clearing allows a glimmer of light on the scraggly group. The painting positively dramatises the hope and vigour of post-war diasporic Chinese communities in the Nanyang seeking to re-invent their future.

Chua Mia Tee (b. 1931, Shantou, Guangdong, China) arrived in Singapore with his family in 1937. He attended Shuqun, then Tuan Mong, and Chung Cheng High School, leaving the latter without completing his course in order to attend the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts where he taught after graduation. He worked as an illustrator for book publishers before launching into his career as an artist in 1974. His major works in the collection of the National Gallery Singapore include *Epic Poem of Malaya* (1955) and *National Language Class* (1959). He is also noted for his portraits of Singapore leaders Lee Kuan Yew and President Yusof bin Ishak.



Simryn Gill
Standing Still #28
2000 - 2003
Chromogenic print, 31.4 x 31.6 cm
Collection of National Gallery Singapore

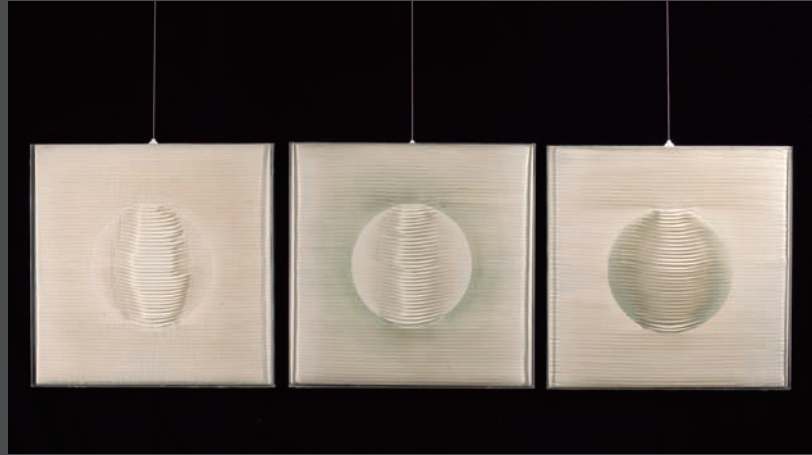
Simryn Gill *Standing Still* **#28**

Standing Still #28 (2000-2003) by Simryn Gill is from a series of 117 photographs of abandoned buildings shot in Peninsula Malaysia during the Southeast Asian financial crisis. The image of an empty building structure overtaken by weeds is seen from within its hollowed core. Its status remains ambiguous. The repeated pattern of columns over desolate space underlines its cascading loss and abandonment, rather like a crumbling hall of mirrors. Gill writes of “a sense that the time that we live in is falling into disrepair and decay even as we still actively occupy its present”. Composer Kelly Tang responds to Gill’s evocation of abandonment and of being useless as existential and emotional positions that one needs to confront.

Simryn Gill (b. 1959, Singapore) resides in Malaysia and Australia. Growing up in Port Dickson, Malaysia, she received her education in India and the United Kingdom. Her creative media include books, drawing, photography, printmaking, publications and writing. Much of her work is based on documenting current relics - through collecting objects and making images through photography and prints. Her work is in collections at the National Gallery Singapore; the Art Gallery of New South Wales; the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia; the National Gallery of Australia; the Museum of Modern Art and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York; Tate, London; and the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw. Gill has participated in Documenta 12 (2007) and Documenta 13 (2012), as well as at the Australian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale (2013).

Eng Tow *Bowls*

Bowls (1979) by Eng Tow comprises three Op art textile works, each the likeness of a bowl formed by the subtle folding and stitching of fabric. Each bowl floats in the space of its background, appearing to emit light like a series of full moons or paper lanterns. Masterfully crafted, the images are created by the manipulation of repeated folds of the single textile used, the tiny folds being finely stitched in place. Eng Tow's textile and tapestry work weaves in modern composition in the simplest terms – combining imaging techniques from Op art, tapestry and print continuing from the Arts and Crafts movement, and Japanese origami. In his composition, Kelly Tang responds to the effect of these contemplative, quiet, unadorned objects.



Eng Tow
Bowls
1979

Cloth and thread, 62.5 x 61.5 cm
Collection of National Gallery Singapore © Tow Eng

Eng Tow (b. 1947, Singapore) had her art education at the Coventry College of Art, the Winchester School of Art and the Royal College of Art, London. She worked in textile design in the United Kingdom, also teaching there until 1981, when she relocated to Singapore. She is an outstanding female artist of the 1980s, receiving a British Crafts Council grant and Fellowship awards from the Japan Foundation and the Asian Cultural Council under the John D. Rockefeller Fund, USA. While best known for her works in textile, Tow works in a variety of media including papermaking, metal and ink. Her works are in many public collections including the National Gallery Singapore; the Asian Civilisations Museum, Singapore; the Fukuoka Art Museum, Japan; Jewel at Changi Airport; and Kovan MRT station.



Han Sai Por
Extinction series 12
2009

Textured granite with sandblast finish, 153 x 100 x 55 cm
Collection of National Gallery Singapore

Han Sai Por *Extinction series 12*

Extinction series 12 (2009) by Han Sai Por is a life-sized sandblasted, textured granite sculpture, part of the artist's watershed exhibition *The Changing Landscape – Deforestation, Destruction, Extinction, Transformation* (2009). Comprising four series of works, the epic installation in its entirety forms a cataclysmic three-dimensional thesis on the loss of natural habitats. Han writes "Human activities have an impact on ecosystems . . . which have led to the decline or extinction of native plants and animals". *Extinction series 12* is the shape of a leafless, deformed tree. Yet Han's handiwork imbues the stone with such softness and textural quality that the sense of loss of life becomes aggravated. Kelly Tang's music responds to the work's enigmatic and mysterious qualities.

Han Sai Por (b. 1943, Singapore) was a full-time teacher taking part-time art courses at Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts in the 1970s. Her formal art study was at Wolverhampton College of Art, United Kingdom, and then in landscape architecture at Lincoln University, New Zealand. She has received numerous awards and prestigious public commissions for her work, including the Singapore Cultural Medallion (1995). Her work is in the collection of the National Gallery Singapore; the National Museum, Beijing; the Australian Parliament; the Chancery of the Permanent Mission of Singapore to the United Nations, New York; the Istana, Singapore; and Changi Airport Terminal 3, Singapore.



Sarkasi Said Tzee
Voices of the Soul
Undated
Batik, 77 x 111 cm
Gift of the artist
Collection of National Gallery Singapore

Sarkasi Said Tzee *Voices of the Soul*

Voices of the Soul (undated) by Sarkasi Said Tzee is a spirited breakaway from traditional batik painting, using a freeform abstract approach. This work is full of joy and optimism – emotive qualities that Kelly Tang has employed in the respective musical movement to express aspirations and ‘the joy of celebration’. The artist employs large brushstrokes of bold, pleasing colours that are attractive and that enhance the textile qualities of batik art. There is much energetic movement in this composition, suggested by the dynamic lines and flowing brushwork used. At the base of the painting, Sarkasi has used darker colours and shapes which erupt into colourful rainbows and splashes midway. These open up to happy yellow and orange hues at the top, suggesting a breakthrough to lightness and hope.

Sarkasi Said Tzee (1940 - 2021, Singapore) was a self-taught artist who sought to reclaim his Javanese roots through his artwork. Following the abstract modern batik art of Jaafar Latiff, Sarkasi’s brilliantly coloured, expressive works gave new life to the batik medium. He remains very well-liked for the colourful abstract batik paintings he produced. His exposure to batik in his childhood began when he assisted his grandmother who sold traditional batik textiles. Returning to his family’s home in Karang Malang, Indonesia to better understand his cultural heritage, he went on to learn batik techniques in Jakarta. Sarkasi served on the National Arts Council, the Malay Heritage Foundation and the Modern Art Society, Singapore. He was awarded the Singapore Cultural Medallion in 2020, a year before his demise.

Music Commissioning Series

The Music Commissioning Series is a 10-year national-level project with global reach that aims to make significant contributions to Singapore contemporary music, the first-ever systematic building of a canon of major Singapore music across genres.

One of The Foundation's key thrusts is the export of Singapore arts which depends greatly on the creation of original works by Singapore artistes. And, the world premiere of *Movements in Time - Artworks from the National Gallery* by Cultural Medallion recipient Kelly Tang is just the beginning.

The idea of the Music Commissioning Series is to build up a canon of original and major music works in Singapore. There have been commissions before, but The Foundation believes in a broader approach to commissioning music across genres. The Music Commissioning Series captures what we are trying to do with the musical ecosystem. The Foundation is doing it thematically to cover different genres that can appeal to various audiences over a span of 10 years.

Without patrons to support original Singapore compositions, the transformative dialogues across time between the composers, performers and audiences are left stifled, unable to beautifully unfold on stages across the world.

Together, we hope to inspire the next generations of Singapore composers through the Music Commissioning Series, fostering a legacy that transcends time.

Composers for the Music Commissioning Series will be selected and commissioned in consultation with the **Advisory Council** comprising experts with the necessary breadth of experience.

Bernard Tan composer and Emeritus Professor of Physics at the National University of Singapore

Chan Tze Law Associate Professor at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of music, and Musical Director/Conductor of the Metropolitan Festival Orchestra

Ho Chee Kong composer and Associate Professor at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music

Jennifer Tham Cultural Medallion recipient and board member of the International Federation for Choral Music

Serene Lim Director, Sector Development (Performing Arts), National Arts Council

Valarie Koh choral conductor

KELLY TANG

Composer

Kelly Tang's compositions have been performed by renowned ensembles such as the Russian National Orchestra, Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra, Nagoya Philharmonic Orchestra (Japan), Ensemble Contemporain of Montreal, Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines (UK) and 'The President's Own' United States Marine Band. In Singapore, Tang's works are performed regularly by the Singapore Symphony Orchestra, Singapore Chinese Orchestra, Singapore National Youth Orchestra and the Tang Quartet. Kelly's jazz compositions have been performed by pianist Jeremy Monteiro with Grammy® recipients Ernie Watts (saxophone) and Randy Brecker (trumpet).

Tang's music has been presented worldwide at Berlin Konzerthaus, Musikverein Golden Hall (Vienna), Sydney Opera House, Suntory Hall (Tokyo), Palais de l'Élysée (Presidential Palace, Paris), Shanghai Concert Hall, Hanoi Opera House, Museum of Musical Instruments (Brussels), The Rodahal (Netherlands), Auditorium di Milano (Italy), St. Paul's Cathedral (London) and Carnegie Hall (New York). His works for young musicians are performed by all school wind bands and choirs in Singapore. For Singapore's 50th anniversary celebrations in 2015, Tang's *Concerto in Three Movements*

was commissioned for a premiere performance by superstar pianist Lang Lang and the Metropolitan Festival Orchestra at the National Stadium.

Tang received his Master's degree in Composition at Northwestern University in 1991 and was awarded his PhD in Music at Michigan State University in 1995. In 2008, he received the COMPASS Artistic Excellence Award from the Composers' and Authors' Society of Singapore. For his contributions in the arts, Tang was conferred the Cultural Medallion in 2011 by the President of Singapore.

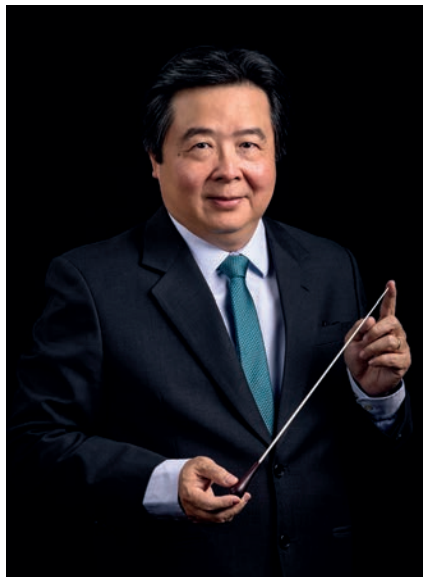
MIKKEL MYER LEE

Piano Prodigy

Labelled as 'piano maestro' by *The Straits Times*, Mikkel Myer Lee made history in Singapore at the tender age of 9 by performing the complete cycle of Chopin's *24 Preludes Op. 28* in a sold-out public piano recital at the Esplanade in February 2022. Following that, he made another historical performance with a full orchestra at the Victoria Concert Hall in July 2022 playing Chopin *Concerto No. 2* and Beethoven *Concerto No. 3*.

Born to parents who are not musically trained, Mikkel was six years old when his father brought him a second-hand piano. Months later, Mikkel brought home Gold in two competitions: the Grand Virtuoso International Piano Competition in Salzburg and Amsterdam. He also went on to win top prizes in the Golden Classical Award Competition USA and the American Protégé Fall Music Competition. Mikkel has since represented Singapore and performed in Mozarteum in Salzburg, Austria and Het Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, Netherlands. He was also invited to perform at Carnegie Hall in New York City, USA.

Mikkel volunteers with the St Luke's Hospital, HCA Hospice and Thye Hwa Kwan Moral Society where he uses his music to bless the lives of those living and working in these homes. In 2021, he started receiving formal music education from renowned Belgian-American pianist Tedd Joselson.



PROF. CHAN TZE LAW

Conductor

Singaporean conductor Chan Tze Law is Vice Dean and founding faculty member of the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music, National University of Singapore (NUS). He is also widely recognised as the Music Director of Singapore's award-winning volunteer phenomenon Orchestra of the Music Makers (OMM) and the Metropolitan Festival Orchestra (MFO).

Chan's performances of Mahler's *8th Symphony* with OMM and Sing50 concerts with superstar pianist Lang Lang with MFO were both named 'Best concerts' by Singapore's *Sunday Times*. Germany's *Der neue Merker* observed that "listeners felt they have concluded a great journey of time and spirit". *The West Australian* lavished praise on his performance of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* describing it as "a tour de force". *American Record Guide* remarked that he led Mahler's *Resurrection Symphony* "with a full understanding of the Mahler idiom". Chan's performance of Elgar's *The Music Makers* was described by *Classical Voice America* as "breath-taking walls of sound and intimate moments of haunting beauty". Chan has also premiered and recorded the music of Singaporean composers Ho Chee Kong, Kelly Tang, Eric Watson, Wang Chenwei and Lee Jin Jun among others.

Originally trained as a violinist, Chan holds both doctoral and bachelor's degrees in orchestral conducting as well as a Master's degree in management and lectures on conducting and leadership at the conservatory. He led the development of Singapore's first university level music modules for professional skills upgrading through the SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG) funding framework, including the conservatory's well received Master of Music Leadership programme. In 2023, he was appointed by NUS to oversee the transformation of NUS Center for the Arts, its 32 NUS student arts groups and the NUS arts festival as Vice Dean of students.

Chan has also taught at the NUS Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy's Senior Management programme. His concerts and CD recordings have been broadcast on Australia's ABC Classic FM, UK's BBC Radio 3 and featured on Singapore Airlines KrisWorld in-flight Classical Music selection, Apple Music, YouTube and Spotify.



METROPOLITAN FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA

The Metropolitan Festival Orchestra (MFO) is Singapore's only fully-independent professional symphony orchestra. With its roots in the acclaimed Singapore Festival Orchestra (SFO), resident orchestra of the Singapore Arts Festival from 2007 to 2012, the MFO was founded in 2013 as the spiritual successor of the SFO.

Notable collaborations include performances with Hans Zimmer, Sarah Brightman, Tan Dun, Lang Lang, Kitaro, Paul Anka, Liu Jia Chang, Il Divo, Stefanie Sun, JJ Lin, Singapore International Festival of Arts, Korea National Opera, Gamelan Garasi Seni Benawa and Synthyony. The MFO is also the pioneer in bringing the immersive blockbuster film-concert format to Asian audiences, presenting the Asian and Southeast Asian premieres of

the Lord of the Rings, and performing numerous film-concerts from the Harry Potter, Star Wars and Frozen franchises. Other global cultural franchise presentations that the MFO has performed include those of Final Fantasy, Kingdom Hearts, Disney on Classic, Sentinels of Light and Free Fire.

Through its strategic partnership with the Singapore Ballet, the MFO performs iconic full-length classical ballet productions as part of Singapore Ballet's annual seasons.

Besides its concert performances, the MFO is also a regional leader in applying the dynamics of the orchestra as a high performance organisation to senior executive leadership training, through its partnerships with INSEAD, the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy and Deloitte University Asia Pacific.

FIRST VIOLIN

Concertmaster
Wilford Goh

Principal
Andrea Lin

Gerard Chia
Joelle Chiam Yan Lin
Kathleen Koh
Lim Hao Wei
Jocelyn Ng
Siew Yi Li
Tan Chunrui
Tang Tee Tong
Yang Yunjie
Zhang Yanjun

SECOND VIOLIN

Principal
Neville Athenasius Ang*

Joelle He
Li Jiaqi*
Edgar Lucena
Sarah Ng
Ng Wei Ping
Jorim Jireh Sim
Tian Rong
Joanne Wong*
Ryan Yee

VIOLA

Principal
Han Oh

Shannon Chan*
Jakim Chang
Erlene Koh
Thantakorn Lakanasirorat
May Loh Qiao Qian
Matthias Östringer
Keita Suyama

CELLO

Principal
Ryan Sim Guan Jie

Chan Sihan
Eugene Chua
Olivia Chuang
Ong Woon Shu
Theophilus Tan
Tan Shi Ling Denise
Trinh Ha Linh

DOUBLE BASS

Principal
Julian Li Yongrui

Eugene Chew
Sanche Jagatheesan
Damien Kee
Wang Luyao
Yeo Zeng Ying

FLUTE

Principal
Jasper Goh

Ke Yi-Chun

OBOE

Principal
Tay Kai Tze

Leow Rui Qing

CLARINET

Principal
Goh Eng Hong Vincent

Benjamin Wong

BASSOON

Principal
Daniel Aw Yong Tian

Yap Zi Qi

HORN

Principal
Alan Kartik

Chua Xin Jie Linda

TRUMPET

Principal
Lau Wen Rong

Ray Chionh Sikai

TROMBONE

Principal
Kow Kang Yue Don

Li Guanlin

TUBA

Principal
Teng Siang Hong

TIMPANI

Principal
Ramu Thiruyanam

PERCUSSION

Principal
Joachim Theodore Lim

Tan Lee Ying
Yuru Lee

HARP

Principal
Fontane Liang

**With deep appreciation to the Rin Collection for their generous loan of instruments*

Section string players and percussionists are listed alphabetically by family name

MANAGEMENT

Managing Director
Low Jia Hua

Executive Director
Dr Kevin Koh

Music Director
Prof. Chan Tze Law

Orchestra Manager
Tan Yao Cong

Library & Production Assistant
Sng Yiang Shan

At the heart of the Foundation for The Arts and Social Enterprise beats a profound belief in the power of sharing the stories of our artistes. The essence of arts and culture, for us, lies in the narratives woven by people who have lived and breathed them. These stories transcend time, connecting us to our rich traditions and heritage, while igniting our imaginations and enriching conversations towards a more sustainable future.

In 2013, Michael Tay had a vision for The Foundation and adopted a very ambitious mission to harness the potential of Singapore's finest talents across genres and disciplines and to share their captivating stories with the global stage.

Drawing upon the boundless potential of artistic expression, The Foundation builds diverse partnerships with artistes, arts groups and institutions. Through these collaborations, a symphony is woven with each thread adding depth to the narrative of how the arts plays a role in each one of our lives.

The heart of The Foundation's creative endeavours rests in the relentless pursuit of arts creation. Together with a network of passionate patrons, we foster an atmosphere that elevates the soft power of the arts. By supporting the growth of original works by Singapore artistes and

iconic multidisciplinary arts initiatives, we strive to showcase the arts as the driving force behind a first-world society, igniting the spark of creativity in the minds of all who encounter its transformative embrace.

The Foundation adopts a unique project development and fundraising approach. We're an arts 'venture capitalist', strategically partnering with artistes to nurture their visions, raising funds and implementing projects while ensuring their enduring impact resonates within communities. Through iconic initiatives such as the *UTOPIA Symphony*, the Music Commissioning Series, the Prodigy Fund, and investing in Singapore artistes, our interventionist approach enriches a more vibrant arts ecosystem.

For innovation to thrive, the arts must flourish – cultivating a creative

economy is an imperative. Art, culture, and the creative mindset play an incredible role in transcending boundaries and starting new conversations. While government measures undoubtedly lay a strong foundation of support for artistes and arts groups, private funding plays an indispensable role in fostering diversity for future generations.

The Foundation, born from a fusion of passion and purpose, invites you to be part of the ever-evolving narrative to propel a society forward through the vibrant tapestry of our stories.

thefoundation.sg
@thefoundationsingapore

Foundation for The Arts and Social Enterprise is registered as an arts charity with Institution of Public Character (IPC) status in Singapore.

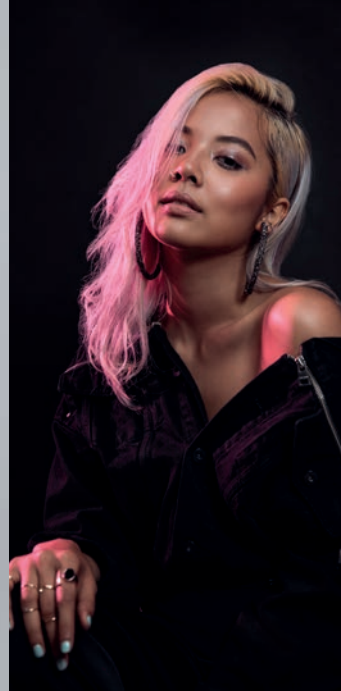
Partnerships Artistes & Arts Groups

Foundation for The Arts and Social Enterprise embraces a 'venture capitalist' spirit, collaborating closely with local artistes, forging powerful partnerships, and commissioning visionary works to nurture creative expression. Through our bold interventionist approach, we propel talented artistes towards the global stage, where their creativity knows no bounds. Together, The Foundation breaks barriers and unveils new horizons, ensuring the artistes' profound impact resonates worldwide.

Supporting local artistes is core to The Foundation's mission. Since 2013, we have worked with:

Abby Simone musician
Aisyah Aziz musician
Alemay Fernandez musician
Alvin Lee filmmaker
Benjamin Yeo composer
Charlie Lim musician
Chiya Amos conductor
Chok Kerong musician
Christina Thé musician
Coming Up Roses band
Dawn Wong musician
Donna Ong visual artist
Dr. S. Chandrasekaran visual artist
Dru Chen musician
Felix Phang composer/musician
Henri Chen KeZhan visual artist
Joanna Dong musician
Kelly Tang composer
Kenny Low visual artist
KEYANA musician
Kumari Nahappan visual artist

Linying musician
Loh Jun Hong musician
M1LDL1FE band
Mikkel Myer Lee piano prodigy
Ng Pei-Sian musician
Nick Zavior musician
OHMYMEITING musician
Sam Lo visual artist
ShiGGa Shay musician
Sonny Liew graphic artist
Sunar Sugiyou visual artist
Tang Da Wu visual artist
Tan Swie Hian visual artist
The Observatory band
The Steve McQueens band
The Straits Ensemble band
weish musician
Weixiang Tan musician
Wong Kah Chun conductor
Yanyun Chen visual artist



Partnerships Institutional Partnerships

The Foundation works with mission-driven organisations and institutional partners interested in co-creating meaningful programmes and projects that support the arts space. We are constantly developing diverse partnerships to amplify our reach and impact.

Since 2013, we have partnered with:

Apsaras Arts Dance Company
Band Directors' Association (Singapore)
Embassy of France in Singapore
Foundation Music
German Embassy Singapore
LASALLE College of the Arts
London Philharmonic Choir
London Philharmonic Orchestra
Metropolitan Festival Orchestra
National Gallery Singapore
New Opera Singapore
Republic Polytechnic
Singapore Clay Festival
Singapore International Jazz Festival (SING JAZZ)
Singapore Polytechnic
Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music



UTOPIA Symphony



Recorded by the London Philharmonic Orchestra at Abbey Road Studios in London under the baton of conductor Vladimir Jurowski, the *UTOPIA Symphony* was released on the LPO classical music label on 13 November 2020, on major digital platforms like Spotify and iTunes, as well as in CD

format. The first in a series of iconic initiatives, the *UTOPIA Symphony* exemplifies the ambition of the Foundation for The Arts and Social Enterprise to raise the level of the arts in Singapore by promoting our artistes to the global stage and initiating iconic projects with enduring impact.



“I think (this) is a good illustration of the aspiration that all Singaporeans should be given the opportunity to achieve whatever they want as long as they have the dream . . . to show the rest of the world that it’s not just what you typically know about Singapore.”

- Foo Chi Hsia, former Singapore High Commissioner to the United Kingdom

When The Foundation Founder Michael Tay was in Moscow as Singapore’s Ambassador, he had commissioned Vladimir Martynov, a major Russian composer, to compose a choral symphony about Singapore. The *SINGAPORE Symphony* was premiered in 2005 in Moscow and 2007 in Singapore. The Singapore Premiere was performed by the Singapore Symphony Orchestra and attended by the late President S R Nathan and MM Lee Kuan Yew. Commissioning the *SINGAPORE Symphony* was a venture to alter the Russian perception of Singapore and to bind the two countries closer.



To transform the symphony from a bilateral project into a universal undertaking, the English version of the symphony was renamed *UTOPIA*, as that was the original impulse of Martynov’s composition. Martynov was very taken by the idea of “Singapore”, using “utopia” to describe the constant striving to excel and exceed its limitations. Utopia, for Martynov, was not a destination or a state of being, but a process of becoming and striving to do better. He compared Singapore to the Tao - “The Tao that can be described is no longer the Tao” - which is reflected in the choral part of the symphony.

“Utopia is something so beautiful that it practically cannot be. But at the same time, when we first came to Singapore at the invitation of Mr. Michael Tay, it seemed to us that this utopia was beginning to be realised there.” Vladimir Martynov

According to Graham Wood, Concerts & Recordings Manager of the LPO, Vladimir Jurowski, then Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor of the LPO, is a great supporter of contemporary music and wanted to record the piece, and so the LPO took the project up. It took two years from when the idea was proposed, to realise the recording at the hallowed Abbey Road Studios in London, where many award-winning albums were created.

“This music has got an almost hypnotic power over the people. And even these few days that we spent in the studio recording it, you could see in the faces of the musicians and in the faces of the choristers, that against their will, against their rationality, the music was taking possession of them, and taking them into a different space.” Vladimir Jurowski

Two Singapore artistes also featured prominently on the album project. The cover art was based on a painting called *Utopia* by an emerging visual artist Kenny Low and a young violinist Loh Jun Hong

played the solo parts with the LPO on the recording. The immensity of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity was not lost on Jun Hong, who later confessed that he was greatly moved by the music and vibes in the recording studio, and had to hold back emotion whilst playing.



“I think the LPO and the London Philharmonic Choir have brought this piece to a different level, which is what we’re trying to do. We’re trying to bring the *UTOPIA Symphony* to a global level, to become a universal undertaking that will send a kind of message to the world today.” Michael Tay



UTOPIA Reimagined Series

How do we get to utopia?
What does utopia even look
like for Singapore artistes?

Initially conceptualised as a 'live' concert as part of the One Million Towards UTOPIA campaign back in 2019, plans for UTOPIA Reimagined had to be reworked as the feasibility of physical outreach efforts remained untenable at the beginning of 2021. By mid-2021, UTOPIA Reimagined had morphed into a series of commissions to produce four music singles to be released on major digital streaming platforms, accompanied by behind-the-scenes video footage to provide insight into the artistes' processes, and tell the story of utopia.

The four commissioned artistes were Joanna Dong, Aisyah Aziz, ShiGGa Shay, and Charlie Lim, some of Singapore's current leading music artistes in their respective scenes. Singapore visual artist Kenny Low, original creator of the *Utopia* artwork that graced the cover of the *UTOPIA Symphony* album, was also commissioned to reimagine his previous work for this project. Charlie Lim served as executive producer to direct the bigger-picture creative strategy.

UTOPIA Reimagined Series

Buoyed by the success of the first UTOPIA Reimagined music commissions, UTOPIA Reimagined II launched in February 2023 with a fresh slate of artistes. Four music singles were released on major digital streaming platforms along with video snippets of artistes' sharings. In addition, a new educational aspect has been introduced. A handful of students from LASALLE College of the Arts, Singapore Polytechnic and Republic Polytechnic were invited to observe some of the processes and shared their learnings on social media.

This round, our four commissioned artistes weish, Dru Chen, OHMYMEITING, and Coming Up Roses, are at varying stages of their musical careers. Visual artist and Young Artist Award winner Dr. Yanyun Chen was commissioned to create her response to the recordings in her own style. Charlie Lim reprised his role as executive producer and collaborated creatively with OHMYMEITING and Dru Chen. weish and Coming Up Roses also sought out new collaborations with multicultural percussionist Cheryl Tan (The Observatory) and Grammy® Award-winning Singaporean mixing engineer Caesar Edmunds, respectively.





Champion the Arts, Make a Donation

Whether it's partnering with Foundation for The Arts and Social Enterprise on a programme, spreading the word through employee engagement initiatives, or direct financial contributions, you play a vital role in amplifying the impact of the arts as a transformative bridge between business, the community and across generations.

Together, we can ignite meaningful conversations, nurture artistic talent, and create a vibrant cultural ecosystem. We invite you to join us in our mission and make a lasting difference through your donation. We are committed to channeling the majority of our funds to our projects. In our most recent financial report, 87% of funds raised went directly to supporting our charitable activities.

The Foundation is an approved Institution of Public Character. A 250% tax deduction is granted by Singapore regulatory agencies for cash donations. Your gift also goes twice as far as all donations are matched dollar-for-dollar by the Cultural Matching Fund.

**Make a direct donation through
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**Donate through [giving.sg/
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This project is a leap of faith. It came together because many individuals had convictions about Singapore and the drive to move things. It was funded from the generosity of many supporters and donors. There was a belief in the inner strength of our small team to bring this project to fruition.

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Information accurate at time of print
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Design by wit & wise

Simryn Gill
Standing Still #28
2000 - 2003
Chromogenic print, 31.4 x 31.6cm
Collection of National Gallery Singapore

