



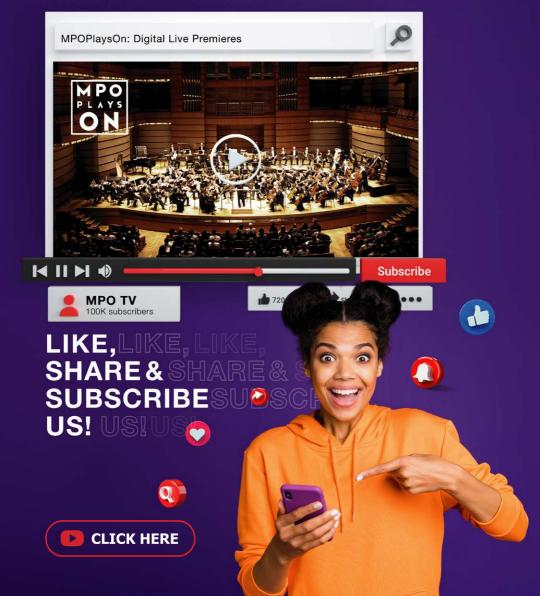
# ESSENTIAL S TORIES

**2025 SEASON** 

PERFORMANCE AT DEWAN FILHARMONIK PETRONAS

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### MAI AYSIAN **PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA**

The Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra (MPO) gave its inaugural performance at Dewan Filharmonik PETRONAS (DFP) on 17 August 1998. With the initial search for outstanding musicians involving a worldwide audition tour, the MPO today is made up of many talented Malaysian musicians and musicians from other nations, a beautiful example of harmony among different cultures and nationalities.

With each new season, the MPO continues to present an exciting programme of orchestral music drawn from over three centuries, as well as the crowd-pleasing concert series. Its versatility transcends genres, from classical masterpieces to film music, pop. jazz, traditional, contemporary and commissioned works.

Among renowned Malaysian artists who have mesmerized audiences with the MPO include SM Salim, Sheila Majid, M.Nasir, Siti Nurhaliza, Jamal Abdillah, Ella, Dayang Nurfaizah, Aishah, Jaclyn Victor and Aubrey Suwito.

A host of internationally acclaimed musicians have performed with the MPO including Lorin Maazel, Sir Neville Marriner, Yehudi Menuhin, Joshua Bell, Harry Connick Jr., José Carreras, Andrea Bocelli, Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Chris Botti, Branford Marsalis and Judika, many of whom have praised the MPO for its fine musical qualities and vitality.

The MPO regularly performs in major cities of Malaysia such as in Alor Setar, George Town, Ipoh, Johor Bahru, Kuantan, Kota Kinabalu, Kuching and many more. Internationally, it has toured Singapore (1999, 2001, 2003, 2005 and 2018), Japan (2001, 2009 and 2017), Korea (2001), Australia (2004), China (2006 and 2019), Taiwan (2007) and Vietnam (2013). The MPO has also released 21 CDs.

The MPO remains steadfast in its mission to be the premier Malaysian orchestra, providing the ultimate music experience through the power of live music that educates, entertains and inspires. Its main benefactor is PETRONAS, and its patron is YABhg. Tun Dr. Siti Hasmah Haji Mohd Ali.

# **Essential Love Stories**

Sat 15 Feb 2025, 8:00 pm

- Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra
- 05 Gerard Salonga, conductor

### **PROGRAMME**

### Negaraku

MARIANELLI

Pride and Prejudice Suite 18 mins

**UMEBAYASHI ROTA** 

In the Mood for Love: Yumeji's Theme 3 mins

Romeo and Juliet: A Renaissance

Timepiece 7 mins

WALLER-BRIDGE Emma Suite 6 mins

### 20-mins intermission

**OFFENBACH** 

Tales of Hoffman: Intermezzo and Barcarolle,

or "Belle nuit, ô nuit d'amour" 4 mins

SHOSTAKOVICH **PROKOFIEV** 

The Gadfly: Romance 6 mins

Cinderella Suite No. 3 26 mins

- 1) Court danse (Pavane)
- 2) The Prince & Cinderella 3) Entertainment of the Guest
- 4) Temptation
- 5) Orientalia
- 6) The Prince finds Cinderella
- 7) Slow Waltz
- 8) Amoroso

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Gerard Salonga is currently Resident Conductor of the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra (MPO) in Kuala Lumpur, a position held since 2019. For two seasons, he served as Assistant Conductor of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra from 2016 to 2018 where he was appointed by Jaap van Zweden, selected from a field of over 170 international applicants. He served as Music Director of the ABS-CBN Philharmonic Orchestra in Manila from 2012 to 2020. In 2021, he began his term as the Music Director of the Orchestra of the Filipino Youth (OFY).

He has assisted and covered distinguished conductors such as Jaap van Zweden, Jun Märkl, Hans Graf, Yu Long, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Mark Wigglesworth and Leonard Slatkin, and has conducted The Philippines and South Denmark Philharmonics, Shanghai Opera House Orchestra and Chorus, Kunming Nie-Er Symphony, Evergreen Symphony of Taiwan, the Bangkok and Singapore Symphonies, Queensland Camerata and Orchestra Victoria. He has also conducted in iconic venues including the Royal Albert Hall.

He has conducted a wide range of performances, covering symphony, ballet, opera, pops, family and film including the Harry Potter, Raiders of the Lost Ark and Ratatouille films in concert, and several Disney concerts. His orchestral arrangements were performed by orchestras such as the BBC, Indianapolis, Guangzhou, Winnipeg and Singapore Symphonies, RTÉ Concert Orchestra, New York Pops, Cincinnati Pops and Royal Philharmonic. He has collaborated as arranger or conductor across different styles with artists such as Lea Salonga, Regine Velasquez, Wang Leehom, Wu Tong, Tengku Irfan, Paul Archibald, Hacken Lee, Anthony Lun, Elisa Chan, Ivana Wong, Michael Ball, Blake, Il Divo, Danielle de Niese, TaikOz, Ksenija Sidorova, Shen Yang, Llŷr Williams, James Ehnes, Jing Wang, Jan Lisiecki and The Beach Boys.

In 2018, he conducted the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and TaikOz in the world premiere of Australian composer Skipworth's Breath of Thunder (concerto for Taiko and orchestra) at the Sydney Opera House which earned an APRA AMCOS (Australian art music) nomination for Performance of The Year. In 2019, he collaborated with pianist Cecile Licad and the Sønderiyllands Symfoniorkester (Denmark) on a new recording of the works of Gershwin for piano and orchestra released on the Danacord label. In 2020 and 2021, he served as music producer for the MPO's recordings of classical and new works for its YouTube channel MPO TV and was the Artistic Advisor for the MPO's collaborations with Malaysian Composers Collective, conducting new works by Malaysian composers. In 2023, he conducted the world premiere of Leung's Metaverse Symphony with the Hong Kong Philharmonic, a recording released by Sony Classical. That same year, he made a debut with the Thailand Philharmonic and soprano Sumi Jo.

As a conductor of musical theatre, he has led orchestras for the stagings of Carousel, They're Playing Our Song, Dreamgirls, Baby, West Side Story and Little Women, all in Manila. In 2019, he conducted Sweeney Todd for Atlantis Theatrical in Manila, and in Singapore for Singapore Repertory Theatre. He is a four-time recipient of the Aliw Award for Best Musical Director and twice winner of the Gawad Buhay Philstage Award.

He has served as a jury member of competitions including the National Music Competition for Young Artists (The Philippines), the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory (Singapore) concerto competition, and the first Malaysian National Concerto Competition. In 2020, he was one of the panelists for the San Francisco Conservatory conducting seminar. In Malaysia, he has given lectures on conducting through MPO's education and outreach programme at the Association of International Schools Malaysia, Taylor's University, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris and Universiti Malaysia Sabah.

In 2012, he was honoured as one of The Outstanding Young Men (TOYM), The Philippines' highest civilian award to achievers under the age of 40. In 2021, he was named one of the recipients of the SUDI National Music Awards by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA).

In 2024, apart from his commitments with the MPO and OFY, he will once again conduct the Hong Kong Philharmonic and Singapore Symphony Orchestra, as well as perform in Australia and the UK.

### PROGRAMME NOTES

### Introduction

From classical to modern music, love may be a universal theme but its facets are so diverse that composers are continuously able to extract delicate nuances to convey this complex emotion from various standpoints.

This evening's concert, a harmonious continuation from the MPO's concert themed A Valentine's Serenade last year, is weaved along the same narrative: that love is an endless repository for inspiration in music. The MPO thus continues its love-themed concert, an orchestral rendition that encapsulates romance, told through some of the world's most distinguished works.

With Gerard Salonga at the helm, embrace a journey of love that spans continents and time, from Russian opera to Hollywood films, that will reveal tales of love that deliver insights on how powerful, even destructive, this emotion can be.

### **Concert notes**

Italian composer DARIO MARIANELLI's (b.1963) Pride and Prejudice Suite from Joe Wright's 2005 film of the same name delivers musical justice to Jane Austen's 19th century literary classic. Unified by recurring melodies of the piano, it starts off as rustic, before developing into a deeply emotional tune as the story of the five sisters who are pushed into marriage, unfolds.

The soothing music is reminiscent of rural England, where the story is set, a beautiful background to the central plot of the romance between protagonist Elizabeth Bennet, the second daughter. Fitzwilliam Darcy, a rich aristocratic landowner and the aloof romantic hero.



Scene from Pride and Prejudice (2005) film



SHIGERU UMEBAYASHI's (b.1951) heartbreaking waltz, Yumeji's Theme is from Wong Kar-Wai's digressive and exhilarating Cantonese-Shanghainese film, In the Mood for Love (2000). Originally scored for a 1991 independent Japanese movie called Yumeji, Yumeji's Theme is a short, striking music that is hypnotic and described as "both beautiful and unsettling".

At the core of the composition is a violent melody that is chilling. a befitting soundtrack to a story about love, betrayal, infidelity and human weakness. The song is played nine times throughout the movie. It is even used as a set piece (where a scene or event is

designed to have a dramatic effect) as the story about two people, whose partners are having an affair, unrayels, questioning what we think we know about love and lovalty.



There is perhaps no Shakespearean love story more romantic than Romeo and Juliet, and NINO ROTA's (1911-1979) composition, written in 1968, is marvellously simple and sophisticated in itself.

A Renaissance Timepiece, from the 2010 album The 5 Browns In Hollywood, gives this beloved tune a new interpretation, without undermining the Renaissance-era music from the most wellknown love theme in film music history. Fresh yet recognisable, upbeat yet melancholic, this composition merges a classic with modern music finesse.

ISOBEL WALLER-BRIDGE's (b.1984) Emma Suite is from Emma, the well-received 2020 movie based on another Jane Austen novel. For six minutes, the Emma Suite captures the heroine's story, Emma Woodhouse, who goes about matchmaking her friends and neighbours.

The orchestral suite starts with the light and bubbly Emma's Theme, before Knightley's. Matchmaking's and Harriet's Themes, after which it goes full circle to Emma's Theme again as the movie closes. A cheerful and upbeat version of love, Waller-Bridge's composition matches wit and emotion in a tune that is perennially happy.



Scene from Emma Suite (2020) film



Also known as Belle nuit, ô nuit d'amour, which means "Beautiful Night, Oh Night of Love" in French, Intermezzo and Barcarolle are from The Tales of Hoffmann, the final opera by French composer JACQUES OFFENBACH (1819-1880). Typically short, the *Intermezzo* is characterised by its light-hearted and charming nature. With a touch of satire, the combination of catchy tune and playful rhythm makes it an easy listening music.

On the other hand, Barcarolle is widely considered the most famous barcarolle (a traditional folk song that originated from Venetian gondoliers) ever written. Composed for a duet of soprano

and mezzo-soprano, the Grove Book of Operas, states that this composition is often praised for its rich and romantic melody, and a vivid portrayal of love under a night sky. Captivating and emotionally resonant, it is no wonder that *Barcarolle* is one of the most recognisable operatic compositions.

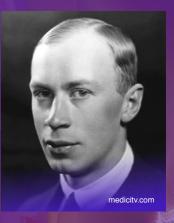


In 1955, Russian composer and pianist **DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH** (1906-1975) wrote the film score for *The Gadfly*, which tells a story about the underground fight between Italian patriots and Austrian invaders for independence.

Unlike his other works, *Romance* is a tender, sentimental love tune, so much so that classical music magazine *Gramophone* says the tune "has achieved the status of a pop classic". It was inspired by Jules Massenet's *Meditation* from *Thaïs* with a melancholy solo and was even used as the theme for a BBC mini-series, *Ace of Spies*.

According to critics, *Cinderella Suite No. 3* is Russian composer **SERGEI PROKOFIEV**'s (1891-1953) finest suite. It begins with "Pavane," containing lively, happy music that portrays the Courtiers dancing while waiting for the arrival of the Prince at the ball. The second movement, "Cinderella and the Prince," is a lovely dance for two with a romantic melody.

Castanets are featured prominently in "Dance of Temptation", an exotic number and "Orientalia" takes over this exoticism with a tune that portrays loneliness. "The Prince finds Cinderella" heralds the romance that is about to flourish and is the pinnacle of the story. Finally, "Slow Waltz" and "Amoroso" close the composition with an emotional resolution, a nod to love and romance, and the perfect end to a delightful evening.





### MALAYSIAN PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA



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Junichi Hirokami

### RESIDENT CONDUCTOR

Gerard Salonga

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Concertmaster Peter Daniš Co-Concertmaster Mina Goh Principal Zhenzhen Liang

Tan Ka Ming Wona Lu Ee Sherwin Thia

\*Marian Gaspar \*Leong Siong Quen \*Chan Mei Teng

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Yunzhi Lina Stefan Kocsis Ionut Mazareanu

\*Miroslav Daniš \*Yasuko Furusho \*Lisa Chia Xiaoli \*Izzvwan Musib \*Keng Xin Tian

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Ona Lin Kern Thian Ai Wen Lau Yew Hann \*Fan Ran \*Loo Pei Zheng \*Ling Li Yen

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### **OBOE**

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Section Principal Tan Shun Zhong

### PERCUSSION

Section Principal Antti Olavi Ohenoja Sub-Principal Yap Siu Yan Ng Lip Sheng \*Tee Ching Hong \*Yon Nian Shee \*Peter-Jan Steen

### HARP

Principal Tan Keng Hong

### PIANO

Principal Akiko Daniš

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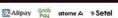
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Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra

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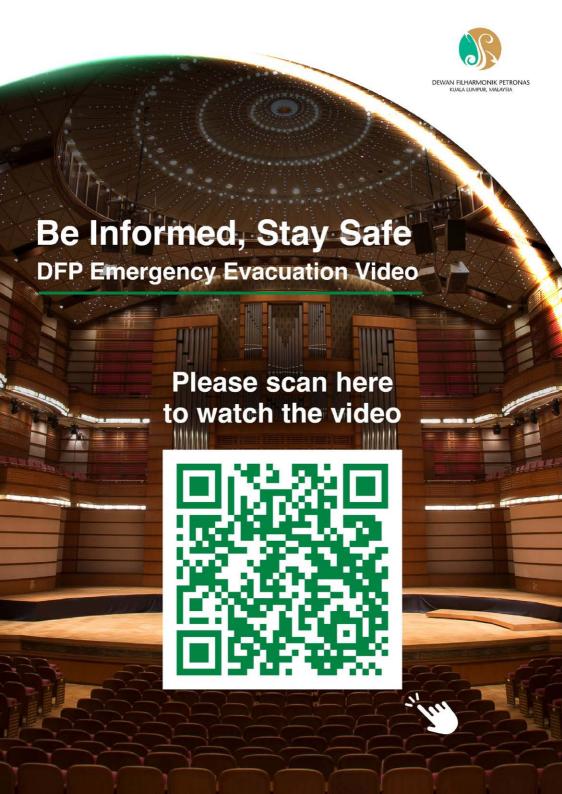
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