



CELEBRATIONS 2015: HOMECOMING

NUS Symphony Orchestra
Conducted by Maestro Lim Soon Lee



Lim Soon Lee



Alan Choo



Chen Zhangyi



Lim Chun



Soh Ser Yee

PROGRAMME

CELEBRATIONS 2015: HOMECOMING

NUS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

MAESTRO LIM SOON LEE – CONDUCTOR

OVERTURE TO LA FORZA DEL DESTINO

GIUSEPPE VERDI (ARR. ROSS JUNGnickel)

SAVING THESEUS...ARIADNE'S LOVE

CHEN ZHANGYI

Lim Chun – Viola

CARMEN FANTASY, OP. 25

GEORGES BIZET (ARR. PABLO DE SARASATE)

Alan Choo – Violin

Intermission

BLESSING THE SEAS (过南海)

LEONG YOON PIN

RHAPSODY IN BLUE (REVISED VERSION)

GEORGE GERSHWIN

Soh Ser Yee – Piano

1812 FESTIVAL OVERTURE, OP. 49

PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



Welcome to the 10th NUS Arts Festival: *Spirit of the Times*.

As our flagship performance platform, the Festival embodies our vision of becoming a vibrant centre for the appreciation of the arts and nurturing of the creative and inquiring spirit of the NUS students. The annual Festival celebrates the best of our 22 Student Arts groups. Through the Festival's innovative programming and partnerships, we aim to grow an active arts community where students, artists, scholars and audience can converge and create.

NUS Centre For the Arts encompasses NUS Museum, NUS Baba House and a Talent & Development arm that oversees the Student Arts groups. Through our programmes, practices, exhibitions, workshops and outreach, we augment the university experience and contribute to the building of knowledge and transformation of the students. We strongly believe that students who engage deeply with the arts enhance their creativity, broaden their perspective and enrich their lives.

On behalf of the Centre, I thank the Festival's professional artists and NUS alums who are inspiring role models for the next generation of arts audiences and talents in NUS. We are grateful to our donors and supporters who share our goal to enrich the intellectual and cultural life of the campus.

Enjoy the Festival!

SHARON TAN

Director

NUS Centre For the Arts

FESTIVAL DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



In 2015, we celebrate Singapore's 50 years of nation building and National University of Singapore's 110th anniversary. At our 10th NUS Arts Festival (NAF) from 20 – 29 March, we recall the achievements of our pioneers who have transformed society today.

NAF 2015 opens with *Words And Music*, a jazz concert helmed by Singapore's best jazz talent Jeremy Monteiro with text from Wang Liansheng. Enjoy the youthful energy of NUS's talented young musicians as they present classical works as well as contemporary compositions by Singaporean composers, the late Cultural Medallion recipient Leong Yoon Pin, Zechariah Goh and Kelly Tang. We are proud to present a new commissioned work by Young Artist Award winner Chen Zhangyi and the Asian Contemporary Ensemble led by Wong Kah Chun.

Look forward to *Overdrive II* by NUS dance talents with two established Asian choreographers Ricky Hu and Chen Wu-Kang. Fringed by live gigs and screenings of films from Israel and Japan, NAF 2015 climaxes with *Dance Reflections* featuring all 6 dance companies under NUS Centre For the Arts.

This year, we welcome an unprecedented level of participation from NUS' arts talents, including outstanding alums who return to share their creativity in the arts. We thank them for their dedication and support.

Through the theme "Spirit of the Times", NAF 2015 looks back at the past as fuel to push forward to the future. The insights into the lives, achievement and spirit of those who have gone before serve to encourage us to also make a difference in the world.

Come explore the spirit of the times with us!

CHRISTINE KHOR

Festival Director

NUS Centre For the Arts

NUS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



The NUS Symphony Orchestra (NUSSO), one of the pioneer university music groups in Singapore, is now home to over 100 musicians. Over the years, NUSSO has built itself an impressive repertoire and reputation, aiming to provide NUS undergraduates an opportunity to pursue their interest in music and promote orchestral music to the public.

Formally established in 1979 as the NUS Concert Orchestra under the directorship of Paul Abisheganaden, the Orchestra's beginnings can be traced back to the 1920s. In 1995, the Orchestra was inaugurated as the NUS Symphony Orchestra under the helm of Music Director / Resident Conductor Maestro Lim Soon Lee.

NUSSO was the first student group in Singapore selected to participate in the Aberdeen International Youth Festival in 1998. NUSSO also participated in the 8th Japan International Youth Musicale in Shizuoka in 2000, the 12th Australian International Music Festival in 2001, and was invited to participate again in the 2005 Aberdeen International Youth Festival.

More recently in September 2013, NUSSO was honoured to be invited by the Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM) in Johor, Malaysia to perform at their 20th Anniversary Concert. In the same year, NUSSO participated in the Summa Cum Laude International Music Festival in Vienna, and clinched the first runner-up in the Symphony Orchestra category after an adjudicated performance at the Golden Hall.

Offering its members artistic instruction by professional tutors and numerous opportunities to travel and perform, the Orchestra, with its dedicated alumni, continues to hone its skills and raise its standard, while promoting appreciation for the arts in Singapore.





MAESTRO LIM SOON LEE

Music Director / Resident Conductor

Under his drive and leadership, the Orchestra was inaugurated as the NUS Symphony Orchestra in 1995.

In 1994, Lim Soon Lee was appointed Music Director / Resident Conductor of NUS Concert Orchestra, whose aim was to provide undergraduates access to the arts and aesthetic development.

Under a Public Service Commission/Singapore Symphony Orchestra (SSO) Scholarship, Soon Lee graduated in 1983 with a Bachelor of Music (Distinction) from the Eastman School of Music University of Rochester, New York, where he studied the viola under Atar Arad and Francis Tursi and completed a two-year conducting course with David Efron and Donald Hunsberger. In the summers of 1984 and 1986, Soon Lee was Principal Violist at Germany's Heidelberg Music Festival and was awarded a scholarship to study the viola under Kim Kashkashian at the Lausanne Academy of Music in Switzerland. From 1987 to 1997, he was Sub-Principal Violist of the SSO, and in 1988, was Singapore's sole representative in the World Philharmonic Orchestra in Montreal, Canada.

Associated with many orchestras worldwide, Soon Lee has conducted the New World Symphony Orchestra in Miami, the Pilyzen Radio Symphony Orchestra of the Czech Republic, the Bakersfield Orchestra in California and the KLPac Sinfonietta in Malaysia. Locally, he has directed the SSO on several occasions, including the 17th SEA Games at the National Stadium and the World Trade Organisation First Ministerial Conference at Sentosa.

In 1995, Soon Lee was awarded the Jean Frederic Perrenoud Prize with a Certificate of Distinction in Orchestral Conducting at the 4th Vienna International Music Competition and was the finalist for the Outstanding Young Persons of Singapore Award conferred by the Orchid Jayceettes of Singapore for his contributions to social development in Singapore.

From 2006 to 2013, Soon Lee was the Associate Principal of String Performance at the School of the Arts.



LIM CHUN

Soloist – Viola

Lim Chun is an extremely gifted violist and Principal violist for both the Singapore Youth Orchestra and the Asian Youth Orchestra. He began his studies at the Peabody Institute of Music at the age of 17 where he received his bachelor and master degrees on full scholarship. His teacher there was Joseph de Pasquale, and he had also participated in the masterclasses of Emanuel Vardi, Roberto Diaz and Heidi Castleman. During his second year at Peabody, he was given an award for his outstanding achievements as a violist. That same year, he began to freelance in the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, playing under the batons of David Zinman, James Depriest, and Yuri Temirkanov.

Chun had performed chamber music at the United Nations and the White House, toured China and Korea as soloist in Richard Strauss' Don Quixote with Yo Yo Ma under the direction of Sergiu Comissiona, and had played Walton's Viola Concerto with the Singapore Symphony Orchestra under Lim Yau, all to critical acclaim.

After his National Service, Chun went to Yale University on a full-scholarship to study with Jesse Levine. A few months into his studies at Yale, he auditioned for Lorin Maazel and became a founding member of his Orquesta de la Comunitat Valenciana, the resident orchestra of the new opera theater, the Palau de les Arts, in Valencia, Spain. There he had worked with Zubin Mehta (director of the theater's summer festival), Plácido Domingo, Valery Gergiev, and Georges Pretre.

"Very accomplished, very musical", wrote Zubin Mehta of him.

"He plays with spirit, ease, seems fearless and is communicative... a rare talent that will make wonderful contribution to music and society."

– Yo Yo Ma

BIOGRAPHIES



ALAN CHOO

Soloist – Violin

Virtuoso violinist Alan Choo performs as a solo and collaborative artist in his native Singapore and across the globe. His playing has been described by *The Straits Times* as “an intoxicating brew of poetry and dare-devilry”, and he infuses those charismatic qualities into every performance.

He has appeared as a soloist with orchestras such as the St. Petersburg Symphony in Russia, the Singapore Festival and Chinese Orchestras, and the Baltimore Baroque Band. He has been honored with the Goh Soon Tioe Centenary Award in 2014 and was the winner in 2011 of Singapore’s National Piano and Violin Competition.

Also an accomplished chamber and orchestral musician, Alan was a member of the Kubrick Quartet from 2012-2014 and was awarded the Grace Clagett Ranney Prize in Chamber Music in 2014. He currently serves as Concertmaster of the Baltimore Baroque Band.

Alan was admitted to the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory at the National University of Singapore at the age of 15, where he completed his undergraduate studies with Alexander Souptel. He subsequently earned two Master of Music degrees at the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore, Maryland – one in Violin Performance and another in Early Music – where he worked under the guidance of the eminent Russian violinist Victor Danchenko and Baroque specialist Risa Browder. During that time, he also performed as rotating Concertmaster and Principal of the Peabody orchestras and was coached by leading chamber musicians, among them, members of the Juilliard, Emerson, Takacs, Tokyo, Brentano and Amadeus Quartets.

Alan performs on a 1850 Vincenzo Postiglione violin, on loan to him from The Rin Collection in Singapore.



SOH SER YEE

Soloist – Piano

Described as a pianist with a “most distinctive and personal musicality in the playing of every note”, Ser Yee has made her appearance as a musician in numerous occasions such as the President’s Challenge Concert, ministerial functions in Istana, Child Prodigies Concert graced by former President Nathan, as well as around the world in the United Kingdom and the United States.

She began learning the art of piano-playing at the age of 4 and has since won numerous awards, the most notable being the 1st prize at the Bradshaw and Buono International Piano Competition 2010. With that, she was invited to perform in the Winners’ Recital at the Carnegie Hall, New York, as a soloist on a National Arts Council partial sponsorship.

At the tender age of 12, Ser Yee obtained her Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music Diploma in Piano Performance. She then moved on to complete her Licentiate of the Royal Schools of Music at the age of 14. That year, Ser Yee was awarded the 2nd Prize at the National Piano and Violin Competition 2007 (Intermediate Category) as well as the 1st runners-up in the Yamaha Piano Competition (Open Category).

She is currently a violist with the NUSSO and was formerly a member of the Singapore National Youth Orchestra (SNYO). During her years in the SNYO, she performed at the Asian Youth Games Opening Ceremony as well as numerous other concerts.

Ser Yee was invited for a live audition at The Juilliard School in New York when she finished her studies at the age of 18 but gave up her opportunity to do so as she made the difficult decision to chase her dreams of becoming a doctor. Nevertheless, she enjoys music just as much and hopes to be able to continue making music and sharing her love for music with others. Ser Yee hopes for an opportunity to combine her love for community service and the arts in the near future.



CHEN ZHANGYI

Composer

The music of Chen Zhangyi has been described by The Straits Times as “a breath of fresh air on our musical landscape” and “music from a choral voice of the future” by BBC radio 3. He has collaborated with ensembles such as London Symphony, *Orchestre de Bretagne*, Tokyo Philharmonic, Baltimore Symphony, Cabrillo Festival Orchestra, Singapore Lyric Opera, *re: mix* and Singapore Symphony Orchestra. His recent operatic works *Window Shopping*, *Laksa Cantata*, and *Pursuant* passionately reveal his Singaporean roots.

Zhangyi has most recently completed a viola concerto commission for violist Lim Chun with the National University of Singapore Symphony Orchestra to celebrate its 110th anniversary, and is currently working on a concerto for violinist Siow Lee Chin and the Singapore National Youth Orchestra. Future collaborations include new works for T'ang Quartet, and Singapore Symphony Orchestra.

He read music at Yong Siew Toh Conservatory (NUS) and Peabody Institute (Johns Hopkins University). His composition mentors include Kevin Puts, Peter Edwards, Thomas Benjamin, and Michael Hersch. In 2014, Zhangyi was awarded both the Paul Abisheganaden Grant for Artistic Excellence (NUS), and the Young Artist Award by the National Arts Council.

Zhangyi teaches music at the Baltimore City Community College, and Peabody Institute. He performs on baroque violin (and viola) with the Charm City Baroque and Baltimore Baroque Band.

Zhangyi received the 2014 Paul Abisheganaden Grant for Artistic Excellence awarded by his alma mater NUS and also won the Young Artist Award (Music) awarded by the National Arts Council, Singapore in 2015.

PROGRAMME NOTES

OVERTURE TO LA FORZA DEL DESTINO

Giuseppe Verdi (Arr. Ross Jungnickel)

From his humble beginnings as the music student of a church organist, Giuseppe Verdi became one of the most well-loved and influential Italian composers. *La Forza del Destino* was one of Verdi's last works; the composer himself considered it one of his finest. The overture includes some of the most important themes in the opera, such as the beginning three-note unison representing the motif of fate. It tells the story of lovers Don Alvaro and Leonora, whose attempts to avoid the travails of the world are useless and are defeated by fate – the force of destiny.

SAVING THESEUS...ARIADNE'S LOVE

Chen Zhangyi

Lim Chun

Saving Theseus.. Ariadne's Love is commissioned and premiered by the National University of Singapore to celebrate its 110th anniversary at the NUS Arts Festival 2015. It is written for viola soloist, Lim Chun and Maestro Lim Soon Lee. This viola concerto is an expansion of a work (*Ariadne's Love*) that was recorded at Abbey Road Studio by the London Symphony and Eric Whitacre Singers. For this occasion, the composer added a new first movement (*Saving Theseus*) and reorchestrated the slow movement (*Ariadne's Love*).

With the new first movement, we hear a portrait of the Athenian hero - Theseus. His character and personality is narrated by the impetuous and suave music that begins the movement, symbolized by virtuosic multiple stops that permeate this movement. The thoughtful side of Theseus is expressed through the harp; an instrument that suggests an Apollonian rationality.

The music focuses on the emotional world of Theseus where the increasingly brooding and heavy-hearted music expresses Theseus' conflict within himself, as he is about to sacrifice himself to save the Athenian youth from Minotaur. The orchestra thins out gradually as the melancholic and lonesome passage that depicts Theseus being trapped within the labyrinth.

PROGRAMME NOTES

As the orchestra re-enters, the thread-like arpeggio lines in the solo viola part paints a sound world of Ariadne's thread leading Theseus out of the labyrinth. They both escape from Crete to the island of Naxos. Theseus feels indebted and thankful to Ariadne; they quickly find themselves deeply in love with each other. Eventually, both of them fall into a deep slumber. However, Theseus is called by the Gods to continue his mission; and he quietly leaves the island of Naxos abandoning Ariadne while she is still asleep. The ship sails.

In the second movement Ariadne's Love, the dream-like music depicts Ariadne awakening on the island of Naxos wondering where she is, and where Theseus is. Gradually realizing that Theseus has left, she is struck by a range of emotions from 'wandering' to *agitato*, and finally she comes to terms that she is all alone (*Ariadne auf Naxos*).

In some versions of the Greek mythology, the Greek god Dionysus will eventually sweep Ariadne away and marry her. This will be narrated in a future third movement, where the story will continue.

CARMEN FANTASY, OP. 25


Georges Bizet (Arr. Pablo De Sarasate)
Alan Choo

The French composer Georges Bizet premiered his opera *Carmen* in 1875, and in 1883, acclaimed Spanish violin virtuoso Pablo de Sarasate wrote the *Carmen Fantasy* based on Bizet's *Carmen* themes. The piece is known for being one of the most difficult in the violin repertoire, and often used as a benchmark by which violin virtuosos are measured, while capturing the passionate feelings of love, deceit and betrayal in the original opera.

BLESSING THE SEAS (过南海)

Leong Yoon Pin

Blessing the Seas tells the story of how the legendary Eight Immortals underwent a series of tests at different times on their personal integrity, sense of justice and love for mankind before they were deified.



Leong seeks to combine his natural Chinese idiom with contemporary techniques. The portrait of the Eight Immortals sailing in a boat in stormy sea has always been a vivid picture in the minds of many and it has inspired the composition of this music work. This work is dedicated to the late former President of Singapore, Mr. Ong Teng Cheong.

RHAPSODY IN BLUE

George Gershwin
Soh Ser Yee

Rhapsody in Blue was written in 1924 for solo piano and jazz band, which combines elements of classical music with jazz–influenced effects.

The piece received its premiere in the concert, *An Experiment in Modern Music*, in 1924, in New York, by Whiteman and his band with the then 26 years-old Gershwin playing the piano. The piece was played after two sluggish hours, while the audience was bored, restless, and couldn't wait to go home. But then, a lone clarinet pierced through the orchestra, fizzing upward like a fountain of champagne. Suddenly, everyone was riveted. It was an unforgettable debut - one that brought new respect to jazz, helped redefine classical music and established Gershwin's reputation as a serious composer.

1812 FESTIVAL OVERTURE, OP. 49

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Despite being one of his best known pieces, Tchaikovsky himself lacked enthusiasm for the work. The music describes Napoleon's Russian campaign, as the opening hymn *God Preserve Thy People* represents the Russian people praying for divine protection against Napoleon's Grand Armée, represented by the French National Anthem of *La Marseillaise*. Just as the French army seems victorious, a severe winter freeze forces Napoleon to retreat. The overture ends with a spectacular finale with unaugmented brass band, joyous bells and 16 cannon shots.

MUSICIANS

FIRST VIOLIN

Samantha Lee^{CM}
 Zhang Heyang^{SL}
 Bryan Ho
 Chen Keru
 Chong Kok Soon
 Elizabeth Low
 Joan Khng
 KarLuis Quek
 Li Chenyi
 Lim Zhan Feng
 Lin Siyan
 Peng Shenghui
 Tan Yue Qian
 Vanessa Tan
 Wei Dongzhou
 Wu Tianhao
 Yang Liuyi
 Yang Wenjing
 Ang Seow Wei[^]
 Chia Jit Min[^]
 Huang Zhengyang[^]

SECOND VIOLIN

Yan Tianqi^{PP}
 Chi Yuchen^{SL}
 Chan Jane Vin
 Chan See Kei
 Cheng Huay Ee
 Cherry Chen Yunqi
 Dean Asalie
 Goh Ying Xiang
 Gu Danning
 Jia Yan
 Koh Yee Cheng
 Lin Yi Hui Nicole
 Liu Dongdong
 Mi Muqing
 Sia Song Yu
 Tsai Chne Wuen
 Liew Seaw Jia[^]

VIOLA

Toh Xue Qian^{PP/SL}
 Alicia Tan
 Cho Jeong Hyun
 Grace Gandi G
 Hew Kai Ling
 Ivan Goh
 Jasmine Lee
 Li Jianing
 Li Yilin
 Lieu Yi Xuan
 Luo Jing
 Wang Meng
 Daniel Heng[^]
 Koh Beiqin Klara[^]
 Koo Yiguang Joshua[^]
 Lee Hwey Ping[^]

CELLO

Kenneth Lee^{PP}
 Belinda Chern^{SL}
 Gareth Lee
 Isabelle Ward
 Johannes Liew
 Michelle Tan
 Or Shi Min
 Phyllis Wong
 Tan Xiao Rong
 Tang Ya Yun

DOUBLE BASS

Cliff Chow^{PP}
 Tan Hui Xian^{SL}
 Cheng Pei Yun
 Edmund Song
 Maya Wyse
 Thia Hui Ting

FLUTE/PICCOLO

Ernest Lin^{PP}
 Goh Ee Hui^{SL}
 Rose Marie Tan
 Liu Yanjun[^]

OBOE

Eddee Chua^{PP/SL}
 Ericsson Ker Ziyi[^]
 Grace Tan See Von[^]

CLARINET

Teow Yue Se^{PP/SL}
 Cheah Hee
 Wang Guoli
 Li Peiru

BASSOON

Koh Swee Jin^{PP/SL}
 Ivy Fung[^]

SAXOPHONE

Elias Arun[^]
 Jay Ong[^]
 Joseph Chong[^]

HORN

Chai Jia En^{PP/SL}
 Low Wei Jie Caleb
 Maximilian Jackson
 Tan Sin Chin
 Adrian Choy[^]
 Cai Jin Pei[^]
 Jaber Sim
 Jude John
 Loh Wan Ping[^]

TRUMPET

Ou Tiankun^{PP/SL}
 Darrel Koh
 Divya Ramesh
 Masagos Hamzah
 Rhyhan Astha

TROMBONE

Bryce Lee^{PP}
 Chua Hui Min^{SL}
 Gordon Tan
 Foong Jun Jie

TUBA

Aloysious How[^]

HARP

Isabel Wong^{SL}
 Tang Shuning

PERCUSSION

Poh Zi Yang^{PP}
 Tay Ting Li^{SL}
 Ishvinder Singh
 Joshua Koh
 Shen Xichen
 Chew Yi Hong[^]
 Tan Wee Yin[^]

^{CM}Concert Mistress

^{PP}Principal Player

^{SL}Sectional Leader

[^]Alumni/Guest Player

A record orchestra
 size of 118 musicians
 to commemorate
 NUS110 & SG50!

Celebrations 2015: Homecoming **21 March 2015**

The NUS Symphony Orchestra wishes to convey its appreciation to the following for their gracious guidance and presence:

Music Director / Resident Conductor Maestro Lim Soon Lee
Assistant Conductor Mr Foo Say Ming

All tutors of NUS Symphony Orchestra

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