CELEBRATIONS 2015: HOMECOMING

NUS Symphony Orchestra
Conducted by Maestro Lim Soon Lee

Lim Soon Lee  Alan Choo  Chen Zhangyi  Lim Chun  Soh Ser Yee
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
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 Yoo 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
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 Effron 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 Plyzen 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), Placido 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
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 violinist 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.
OVERTURE TO LA FORZA DEL DESTINO
Giuseppe Verdi (Arr. Ross Jungnickel)

From his humble beginnings as the music student of a church organist, Guisepppe 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.
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 virtuosi 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 anaugmented brass band, joyous bells and 16 cannon shots.
MUSI C I N S

FIRST VIOLIN
Samantha LeeCM
Zhang HeyangSL
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 Dongzou
Wu Tianhao
Yang Liuyi
Yang Wenjing
Ang Seow Wei^∗
Chia Jit Min^∗
Huang Zhengyang^∗

VIOLA
Toh Xue QianPP/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^∗

OB E
Eddee ChuaPP/SL
Ericsson Ker Ziyi^∗
Grace Tan See Von^∗

CLA RIN E T
Teow Yue SePP/SL
Cheah Hee
Wang Guoli
Li Peiuru

B A SOON
Koh Swee JinPP/SL
Ivy Fung^∗

SA XOPH O NE
Elias Arun^∗
Jay Ong^∗
Joseph Chong^∗

CEL LO
Kenneth LeePP
Belinda ChernSL
Gareth Lee
Isabelle Ward
Johannes Liew
Michelle Tan
Or Shi Min
Phyllis Wong
Tan Xiao Rong
Tang Ya Yun

HORN
Chai Jia EnPP/SL
Low Wei Jie Caleb
Maximilian Jackson
Tan Sin Chin
Adrian Choy^∗
Cai Jin Pei^∗
Jaber Sim
Jude John
Loh Wan Ping^∗

T DRUMP ET
Ou TiankunPP/SL
Darrel Koh
Divya Ramesh
Masagos Hamzah
Rhyhan Astha

C M Concert Mistress
PP Principal Player
SL Sectional Leader
^∗Alumni/Guest Player

SECOND VIOLIN
Yan TianqiPP
Chi YuchenSL
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^∗

DOUB LE B A SS
Cliff ChowPP
Tan Hui XianSL
Cheng Pei Yun
Edmund Song
Maya Wyse
Thia Hui Ting

FLU TE/PICCOLO
Ernest LinPP
Goh Ee HuiSL
Rose Marie Tan
Liu Yanjun^∗

TU BA
Aloysious How^∗

H ARP
Isabel WongSL
Tang Shuning

PERCUSSION
Poh Zi YangPP
Tay Ting LiSL
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

NUS Symphony Orchestra Executive Committee 2014/15

President      Poh Zi Yang
Vice-Presidents Edmund Yuen, Shen Xichen
Secretary      Lin Siyan
Treasurer      Chai Jia En
Marketing Officer Elizabeth Low
Welfare Officer Michelle Tan
Logistics Officers Johannes Liew, Teow Yue Se
Librarian       Tan Yue Qian Clarissa

Publicity Partners

华新社团  @华新Huasing     新加坡眼 @新加坡眼

Anglo-Chinese School Wind Orchestra
NUS Jazz Band
NUS Wind Symphony
Orchestra of the Music Makers
Windstars Ensemble

Find us on Facebook: fb.com/nussymphonyorchestra
Visit our official website: nussymphonyorchestra.wordpress.com