

# Photo Gallery

## Third Best of ASEAN Performing Arts “Singapore Showcase: Cultural Crossings”

Jakarta, 30 April 2009

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*"Culture helps to shape and build a community, and as we build an ASEAN Community, we will bridge the divide through culture and come together as one, with one common identity and one shared vision. The Best of ASEAN Performing Arts celebrates ASEAN's unity in diversity, showcasing ASEAN to the world," said Dr Surin Pitsuwan, Secretary-General of ASEAN.*

The Best of ASEAN Performing Arts is a series of cultural events that showcases the richness and diversity of performing arts in the region. The purpose of the series is to promote ASEAN awareness through the region's rich and diverse cultures as well as to acknowledge the important role that Jakarta has played over the last 33 years as the host city of the ASEAN Secretariat.

The series was proposed by the Secretary-General of ASEAN, Dr Surin Pitsuwan, at the 3rd Meeting of the ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Arts and Culture in Nay Pyi Taw on 12 January 2008.

As the third ASEAN country to participate in the Best of ASEAN Performing Arts (BoAPA) series, Singapore was pleased to present *Singapore Showcase: Cultural Crossings* – an evening of entertainment through performing arts presentations, a photography exhibition and cuisines from Singapore's diverse cultures.

Jointly organised by the Singapore International Foundation (SIF) and the ASEAN Secretariat, Cultural Crossings will offer the ASEAN community and other international guests a snapshot of Singapore – showcasing its latest artistic and cultural offerings. The theme of Cultural Crossings recalled Singapore's historical melting pot of diverse peoples, set amidst the contemporary backdrop of an increasingly cosmopolitan city: an *entrépot* in both the commercial and cultural senses.

The two previous Member States that have contributed to the success of the series were: Indonesia with “The Mosaic Archipelago” in May 2008 and Thailand with “Tapestry of Thai Beauty and Grace” in August 2008.

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### A Visual Account of the Last 24 Hours by eye é eye

In partnership with Singapore’s photography group, *eye é eye*, *Cultural Crossings* brought a photographic exhibition featuring black-and-white photographs that provide different perspectives of Singapore and what it means to her people. The goal of the group is to preserve the collective memories of Singapore through the eyes of people from all walks of life, be they foreign or local, as a collective effort to document humanism and history of the city.



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### **About eye é eye**

Registered as a *non-profit* society on 3 November 2006, *eye é eye* is the organiser of the annual flagship event, *A Visual Account of the Last 24 Hours*. Led by a team of dedicated volunteers, the society also organises other fringe activities for the public including photography exhibitions, talks and sharing sessions.

The overarching vision of *eye é eye* is to raise awareness and concern for the society at large by becoming a communal platform to allow participants to share interact and learn through activities like art, photography, journalism and heritage.

In the years to come, *eye é eye* aims to be the driving force for a more compassionate and empathetic Singapore through retracing, recounting, reliving and reflecting upon our past and present.

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### “A Picturesque Hymn” by the Siong Leng Musical Association

Presenting the essence of the thousand-year old '*nanyin*', the imperial music and dances of the Han dynasty. Listen to the haunting sound of the xiao (a type of flute) from afar, and the captivating blend of traditional and modern music.



The piece explored the development of *nanyin* music and its compositions, charting its migration from Southeast Asia and, in particular, Singapore.



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“A Picturesque Hymn” presented *nanyin* music with traditional Chinese instruments as well as Indian percussions. The music is performed alongside mime and Chinese opera.



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### About *Nanyin*

*Nanyin*, which literally means “music of the south”, is one of the most ancient musical art forms in China. Serene and elegant, *nanyin* songs and music have soothed and uplifted kings and common folk alike through the centuries.

Also known as *xianguan* or *nanguan*, *nanyin* has its roots in China’s imperial courts and later flourished in Fujian’s Quanzhou region. Over the years, it spread to Taiwan, Hong Kong and further to Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore and beyond.

The chief musical instruments used in a *nanyin* performance are the *pipa* (a pear-shaped four-string lute), *sanxian* (a long-necked three-string fretless string instrument whose sound box is covered with python skin), *dongxiao* (a vertically-held six-hole bamboo flute) and *erxian* (a two-string fiddle). The music is also performed with a full array of percussion instruments.

*Nanyin* is sung in the *Minnan* dialect and is closely tied with the poetic rhythm and dramatic tunes from Central China. The melodies of *nanyin* were all notated in the form of *gongchepu*, a Chinese traditional form for notation and researchers have found more than 2,000 pieces of *nanyin* music, which included Buddhist music, court music and music for processions.

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### About the Siong Leng Musical Association

The Siong Leng Musical Association preserves, develops and promotes traditional Chinese *nanyin*, which is used in *liyuan* opera. It also aims to secure *nanyin* and *Liyuan* opera a place in the modern milieu by exploring the relevance of classical Chinese opera forms in relation to modern theatrical practices, as well as enabling *liyuan* opera practitioners to better understand both traditional and contemporary theatrical forms.

The association was first established in 1901 as the *Heng Yun* Association, the most active *nanyin* group in the Malay Peninsula and reborn in 1941 as the Siong Leng Musical Association in the tumultuous days of the Chinese war of resistance against the Japanese. It contributed to the *nanyin* revival in the 70s when its new chairman Teng Mah Seng sought to help it grow by penning several hundred new style *nanyin* lyrics which revolutionized the expressive range and subject matter of *nanyin*, publishing songbooks, organising regional conferences and putting *nanyin* and *Liyuan* opera on the world stage.

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### Concert by re:mix, Conducted by Mr Foo Say Ming

The performance sampled the diversity of re:mix’s repertoire – ranging from classical to the popular; from the European and the American continents to Asia; from palpating tempos to weeping melancholia. The pieces invite the audience to listen with a new ear and to make fresh discoveries in the harmonic journey.

Apart from the Vivaldi, Roxanne El Tango was arranged by Sarah Wong and the rest of the programme was arranged for re:mix by Kelly Tang. Among the performances were Vivaldi “Summer” (from “The Four Seasons”); Quizas Quizas Quizas; Mona Lisa; “The Moon Represents My Heart”; “Lover’s tears”; “Sweetly”; “Beneath the Plum Tree”; and Roxanne El Tango.



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### **About re:mix**

re:mix is an ensemble of classically-trained musicians who believed classical music is in need of a more laid-back, fun-oriented re-jig. Led by violinist Foo Say Ming, re:mix comprise some of Singapore's most passionate local and international chamber musicians.

re:mix strive to creatively re-mix classical music with other genres, and in turn celebrate the wonderful and atypical results that emerge. Music, under re:mix's programming, is inspired by disparate and interesting disciplines, such as film, architecture, dance, philosophy, environment, etc. This muse has helped re:mix's showcase its programming in five noted performances at the Esplanade Recital studio, namely “introducing re:mix”, “film/music”, “The Standards”, “SLOC” and “Beyond Boundaries”.

Re: mix's aim is not to affect a simplistic crossover, but to rethink music. As a relatively young ensemble, re:mix have collaborated with Ode to Art (a premiere art gallery in Singapore), Hong Kong actor-singer Eason Chan, Esplanade Theatres on the Bay and dance company Arts Fission Company, etc. re:mix has also been invited to music festivals in Sabah, Malaysia and Phuket, Thailand.

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### Closing

