

## Singapore Displays Crossing of Cultures at ASEAN Series in Jakarta

***Singapore is third country to take part in the Best of ASEAN Performing Arts series, in an evening of performances organised by the Singapore International Foundation and the ASEAN Secretariat***

**Singapore, 30 April 2009**

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Singapore takes to the stage in Jakarta this month in the Best of ASEAN Performing Arts series.

The Singapore International Foundation (SIF) and the ASEAN Secretariat (ASEC) will jointly present *Singapore Showcase: Cultural Crossings* on April 30 to an expected audience over 400 invited guests, at Jakarta's historical performance arts venue Gedung Kesenian Jakarta<sup>[1]</sup>.

The Best of ASEAN Performing Arts was proposed by ASEAN Secretary-General, Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, at the 3rd Meeting of the ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Arts & Culture on January 12, 2008.

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.

Singapore is the third ASEAN member state to take to the stage; the first two showcases were put up by Indonesia (May 2008) and Thailand (August 2008), also in the capital city of Jakarta.

*Singapore Showcase: Cultural Crossings* will offer the ASEAN community and other international guests a snapshot of Singapore's latest artistic and cultural offerings. The theme of *Cultural Crossings* is a nod to Singapore's 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 event is supported by the Ministry of Information, Communication and the Arts, Singapore, and Office of the Singapore Permanent Representative to ASEAN.

The evening's host and guests include Secretary-General of ASEAN, Dr. Surin Pitsuwan; and special guests Drs. Wardiyatmo (Secretary-General of Indonesia's Ministry of Culture and Tourism) and Mr. Chan Yeng Kit (Permanent Secretary of Singapore's Ministry of Information, Communication and the Arts).

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<sup>[1]</sup> The venue was first established by British colonialist Sir Stamford Raffles, who incidentally founded modern Singapore in 1819; subsequent renovations were undertaken by the Dutch government and it most recently restored and renovated in 1987.

The highlights of the evening's line-up are:

**Exhibition: eye é city** — Praised by President S R Nathan as bringing “together people from all walks of life regardless of age, race, or language”, *eye é city* is visual account of the last 24 hours of 2007 in Singapore, presented as a photography exhibit.

**Performance by the Siong Leng Musical Association**—Established over a century ago, in 1901, the Association preserves, develops and promotes traditional Chinese *nanyin*, which is used in *liyuan* opera. While the group preserves the classical Chinese opera forms, it also contemporarises it by relating to modern theatrical practices such as dance and opera. The repertoire for the evening will include traditional as well as fusion pieces, with instruments ranging from the Chinese *xiao*<sup>[2]</sup> to the Indian *tabla*.

**Performance by re: mix** — Led by Singaporean violinist Foo Say Ming, re : mix comprises some of Singapore's most passionate local and international chamber musicians. Works to be presented will include Vivaldi's “Four Seasons” and Taiwanese singer Theresa Teng's “Lover's Tears”.

Secretary-General of ASEAN, Dr Surin Pitsuwan, said, “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.”

MICA Permanent Secretary Mr. Chan Yeng Kit, expresses his anticipation for the Singapore Showcase: “It is an honour for Singapore to be the third ASEAN member nation to present the Best of ASEAN Performing Arts in Jakarta. The Singapore Showcase is an excellent platform to showcase the achievements of multi-cultural Singapore in the fields of arts and culture. We hope that our friends in ASEAN and Jakarta will enjoy the programme Singapore has put together and we look forward to a delightful evening of cultural exchange.”

SIF's Executive Director Ms. Jean Tan elaborates, “As an organisation committed to bridging communities, the Singapore International Foundation is honoured to be part of this latest ASEAN series. We are bringing some very interesting musical offerings that infuse the modern with the traditional—to cater to the sophisticated tastes of audiences in Jakarta. We definitely hope to match the expectations

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<sup>[2]</sup> A type of flute

that come with the venue—Gedung Kesenian Jakarta—which played host to numerous world-class cultural acts.”