

Youth orchestra celebrates one decade with special performances

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THE Malaysian Philharmonic Youth Orchestra (MPYO) is set to host a string of concerts at Dewan Filharmonik Petronas as it celebrates its 10th anniversary.

Showcasing classical works such as Shostakovich's *Festive Overture*, Vaughan Williams' *Symphony No.2 in G*, *A London Symphony* and Haydn's *Symphony No.104*, the concerts will take place between Aug 5 and June 10, next year.

The public can also catch the world premiere performance of Irfan's *New Work*, a composition by 19-year-old concert pianist Tengku Irfan, as well as a performance of Ravel's *Tzigane* by 13-year-old violinist Low Zi Yang.

The MPYO was first established in January 2006 with the aim of providing an avenue for young musicians to pursue their passion and integrate them into a highly-skilled ensemble.

Back then, 500 aspiring maestros from across Malaysia auditioned to be a part of the new youth orchestra, but only 110 participants were selected.

The MPYO has always been known for its tight selection process with a standard of acceptance set by Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra (MPO) musicians to match up with the difficulty of mastering the art of playing in an orchestra.

It made its debut in August 2007

with a concert led by conductor Kevin Field.

Since then, it has enjoyed a decade of success in training young musicians in a wide variety of music styles by performing repertoires ranging from classical music to Broadway tunes, jazz and traditional music.

"The whole plan for creating the MPYO was to have a youth orchestra with high calibre," said MPYO head Ahmad Muriz Che Rose, who is also a seasoned conductor for both the MPO and the youth orchestra.

Today, there are 96 active members in the orchestra, aged between nine and 28.

He added that he was very proud to see how much the musicians had grown over the years, with improvements in technique and skill as well as personal development.

"The team rose to the challenge many times with difficult pieces.

"We have also collaborated with renowned conductors, and have toured around Malaysia as well as Singapore, Australia and Japan to showcase our talent," he shared.

In its decade of existence, the MPYO has stayed on the path of nurturing its young members through conducting week-long music camps which happen three times a year.

Current MPYO musician Andrea Sim, 21, and alumni Mohd Mustaqim Abdullah, 33, are testament to the orchestra's training.



Ahmad Muriz (centre) with musicians Sim (left) and alumni Mohd Mustaqim are looking forward to MPYO's anniversary concerts.

Sim, who plays the violin, recalled the time when she first joined the orchestra.

"The camps have changed me as a person and musician.

"Not only have I learned how to play in a team, but I've also learned how to value every instrument and musician in an orchestra," she said.

She is currently pursuing a bachelor's degree in classical music at UCSI University.

Mohd Mustaqim, on the other hand, received positive comments regarding a change in his character after attending his first camp.

"The orchestra made me a much

more tolerant person, and has elevated my level of playing.

"We have also gained invaluable insight and knowledge from tutors who are musicians in the MPO as well as world famous conductors," said the trombone player.

Mohd Mustaqim is currently a brass teacher at Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris and a number of international schools in Kuala Lumpur.

"Whatever knowledge I have learned from the MPYO, I share with my students.

"It is like a continuation of knowledge," he enthused, adding

that some of his students are now in the orchestra as well.

Audiences will now have ample opportunity to see the determination and skill of these young musicians live on stage during the 10th anniversary festivities.

There will also be a special reunion concert that will be held on Aug 25, with Kevin Field returning as conductor.

The full list of anniversary concerts and further information can be found on www.mpo.com.my.

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