

NUS CENTRE FOR THE ARTS presents:

NUS ARTS FESTIVAL 2022

SHADES OF LIGHT(NESS)

Radiance of Hope

NUS Symphony Orchestra
26 March, UCC Hall





DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



A very warm welcome to **NUS Arts Festival 2022: Shades of Light(ness)** – which NUS Centre For the Arts is once again proud to present.

We live in a world grappling with uncertainty. Now, more than ever, society is challenged to look beyond black-and-white paradigms, and contend with the shades of grey in-between. This ever-expanding liminal space demands that we use a wider variety of cognitive “lenses” to bring focus and make sense of a multi-hued, multi-faceted world. In that regard, this year’s festival theme is most apt, as is our multi-disciplinary creative approach which brings together student artists, professional arts practitioners, as well as leading researchers and thought leaders in NUS to explore how the arts can help us better appreciate and negotiate ambiguity.

To that end, we open the festival with NUS Dance Synergy’s *Incandescent - A City That Never Sleeps*, a work that investigates the disappearance of stars in Singapore’s night sky. In a city with one of the highest light pollution levels in the world, this work probes the effects of our contemporary urban lifestyle, asking if it embraces or disrupts the symbiotic relationship between the environment and our human bodies.

We also see this in works like *Bodhi - The Awakening* by NUS Indian Instrumental Ensemble. Directed by Cultural Medallion recipient T Sasitharan, the work fuses Indian classical music with theatrical elements, reflecting on the duality of light and darkness, and the transitions between light and darkness in the journey towards enlightenment.

Another work utilising the metaphor of light to explore ambiguity and uncertainty is *Blackout* by NUS Stage. Directed by award-winning theatre-maker Chong Tze Chien, this dark comedy looks at a man’s odyssey through the fractured recesses of a dark, forgotten past, as he struggles to make sense of the conflicting stories about who he is.



In this edition of the Festival, we have been most fortunate to partner the College of Design and Engineering (CDE) for a series of thought-provoking and visually arresting installation works. *Somewhere in This Fog of Memory* explores the mind of a person living with dementia, putting the viewer in the place of someone constantly grappling with a slippery reality; *In Living Company* challenges the norms of our disposable economy, using light to show how discarded objects can give rise to new life. *A Close Eyecounter* - a collaboration with visual artist Ryf Zaini - uses simulated LiDAR technology in an interactive installation that questions how our physical vision determines what we can see, and how we take our natural quality of eyesight for granted.

Of course, NUS Arts Festival would not be possible without the hard work, courage and creativity of our students and artistic directors. Their passion, resilience, and creativity have really shone through during these dark and uncertain times.

We are also deeply grateful for the continued support from NUS creative partners, such as our long-standing partnership with the Department of Communications and New Media, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. We are also particularly privileged to extensively partner the College of Design and Engineering for the first time, and we believe that this fusion of the arts and engineering will be particularly illuminating.

Our thanks also for the continued support of our donors: Bowen Enterprises, Kewalram Chanrai Group, and RB Capital. We would also like to thank the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth for its Cultural Matching Fund. All these generous support has been invaluable in keeping ablaze our students' passion for the arts.

I sincerely hope that you will enjoy **NUS Arts Festival 2022: Shades of Light(ness)** - may the many performances, installations, and films bring light into your life.

Sharon Tan
Director
NUS Centre For the Arts

MESSAGE FROM MR LIM SOON LEE

Music Director, *Radiance of Hope*



NUS Symphony Orchestra's (NUSSO) musicians are special to me; they are keen, and passionate musicians. In many moments during rehearsals has the music has touched me!

Performing these two masterful works: Beethoven's *Symphony No. 7* and Brahms' *Symphony No. 2* has united us further. When the final triumphant chord arrives; we are reminded that life is a journey of joy, love and hope as Brahms and Beethoven wrote in their music.

These pieces were chosen because the orchestra can learn the symphonic writing style of Beethoven and Brahms which are both late classical and romantic pieces. These works not only help the musicians to play as a whole but also develop a symphonic style of playing in an orchestra. For Saint-Saëns *Violin Concerto No.1*, we discovered the concerto to be a "large chamber ensemble" with our soloist Mr Foo Say Ming, which was quite interesting.

Hope everyone will enjoy our special live concert "Radiance of Hope"!

CREATIVE TEAM

Mr Lim Soon Lee *Music Director and Resident Conductor*



Since 1994, Mr Lim Soon Lee has led the 100-strong NUS Symphony Orchestra through many national projects, concerts and international festivals. His involvement with classical music in NUS dates back to 1980, helping to lay the foundation of the Orchestra.

Mr Lim was awarded the Public Service Commission Scholarship to study at the Eastman School of Music with world-renowned violists Atar Arad and Francis Tursi and conductors David Efron and Donald Hunsberger.

Soon Lee previously also held positions as the Sub-Principal Violist in Singapore Symphony Orchestra, Music Director of the Singapore National Youth Orchestra and the Associate Principal of String Performance at School of the Arts.

Mr Foo Say Ming *Assistant Conductor and Violinist*



Foo Say Ming is NUSSO's Assistant Conductor. He has led NUSSO in premiering Singaporean composer Chen Zhangyi's Rain Tree, and the Singapore's premier of Sculthorpe's Piano Concerto with British virtuoso, Geoffrey Saba.

At the 4th National Music Competition in 1983, Say Ming attained 1st prize in the Violin (Open) Category, the 1st prize of the Ensemble (Open) Category, as well as the Best Performer Award. He was conferred a Public Service Commission/ Singapore Symphony Orchestra scholarship to study at the Royal College of Music, where he attained his Diploma of the Royal College of Music for Performers in 1989 and won many notable prizes. A recipient of the Monte de Paschi Summer Scholarship, he studied at the Academia Musicale Chigiana in Sienna (Italy) with Boris Belkin in 1987. He also studied with Pierre Amoyal at the Conservatoire de Lausanne (Switzerland).

Say Ming also conducts young musicians of the Singapore National Youth Orchestra, as well as various young musicians' orchestras in Malaysia and Indonesia. In 2011, he conducted the Singapore Lyric Opera (SLO) Orchestra where he assumed the roles of conductor, leader, concertmaster and violin soloist. In 2012, Say Ming was appointed as Head Of Strings at the Nanyang Academy Of Fine Arts (NAFA) School Of Music, and also conducts the NAFA School Of Music Project Strings.

SYNOPSIS



Drawing inspiration from the spectrum of colours and moods in light, NUS Symphony Orchestra brings you Radiance of Hope, a two-concert series. We wish to inspire hope and spark joy during these troubled times with our programme and the music that we present to you. This concert is also our first live concert since January 2020 and hence, a symbol of hope that everything would eventually return to normalcy.

During the afternoon concert, we will be presenting Beethoven's Symphony No. 7. Beethoven's Symphony No. 7 was written during one of Beethoven's toughest and most painful periods in his life - with his worsening deafness, failed romantic pursuits, poverty and the ongoing Napoleonic Wars. However, despite these, this symphony is one of Beethoven's most optimistic works - and brings to us a sense of hope in these unprecedented times.

For the evening concert, we will be presenting The Barber of Seville Overture from one of Rossini's most famous comic operas, an opera that is meant to be light and bring joy. Following this is the energetic Saint-Saëns Violin Concerto No. 1, which will be making its Singapore premiere. A sunny and pastoral-like piece, Brahms Symphony No. 2, alternates between moments of light and darkness - which embodies our concert Radiance of Hope to its truest sense, where we are emerging into the light from dark times and that there is hope at the end of the tunnel.

CONCERT PROGRAMME

AFTERNOON CONCERT

Faust : Ballet Music (Act V)

Charles Gounod

I. Movement de Valse

V. Moderato con moto

VII. Danse de phryne

Conducted by Mr Foo Say Ming

Symphony No. 7

Ludwig van Beethoven

Conducted by Mr Lim Soon Lee

EVENING CONCERT

Barber of Seville (Overture)

Gioachino Rossini

Conducted by Mr Lim Soon Lee

Violin Concerto No. 1 in A major

Camille Saint-Saëns

Conducted by Mr Lim Soon Lee

Soloist: Mr Foo Say Ming

Symphony No. 2

Johannes Brahms

Conducted by Mr Lim Soon Lee

AFTERNOON CONCERT PROGRAMME NOTES

Faust: Ballet Music (Act V)

Charles Gounod

Faust was the most popular opera of the early twentieth century, inspired by Goethe's famous drama. The opera consisting of five acts tells the story of Faust, a man who sells his soul to the devil for knowledge, power and love. In Act V, Faust tries to save his lover Maguerite who will be executed for killing their unborn child. However, as Maguerite sees the devil who is with Faust, she panics and is taken to heaven.

The delicate and light first movement, Movement de Valse, opens with eight long chords, and is followed by the faster fifth movement, Moderato con moto. The music progresses towards an energetic finish with the seventh and last movement, Danse de phryne.

Symphony No. 7

Ludwig Van Beethoven

Widely revered as one of the greatest composers who has ever lived, Ludwig van Beethoven was a German composer who paved the way for the Romantic Revolution through his works. Beethoven wrote his seventh symphony while living in one of the most painful periods of his life, with the worsening of his deafness, failed romantic pursuits, poverty, and the ongoing Napoleonic Wars. Despite all these, Symphony No. 7 is widely known as one of Beethoven's most optimistic works that showed the more ebullient side of Beethoven's compositional personality.

Almost dance-like, this energetic piece has no slow movement. After a long, expanded introduction, Beethoven propels us forward with fiery energy in the first movement marked poco sostenuto. This is followed by the immensely popular and serious Allegretto movement, setting up for the bright and bouncy Scherzo and its trio based on an Austrian pilgrims' hymn filled with the joys of life. Lastly, the Allegro con brio finale brings the sense of pace to an extreme point, a truly wild and swirling motion adumbrated in the first movement, both inspired and unrestrained.

AFTERNOON CONCERT

MUSICIANS

Violin I

Chen Yi Jia**
Lian Ko-Shyan
Liu Fang Hui
Ochiai Yuka
Oh Wan Jenn, Tanya
Tamane Hatara
Thomas Paul Jacques Tuloup

Viola

Chan Shee Ann Shannon
Fong Hiu Ching Genevieve
Heng Rui Ying Lynette
Nethania Che Khai Le

Double Bass

Damien Chew
Lau Jean Ning**

Flute

Liu Chen**
Soo Bin Park

Oboe

Liau G Kent*

Clarinet

Evan Xia Yixuan
Ma Yi-Ting^

Bassoon

Tey Cheng Shin Aviel*

Violin II

Chung Ruei Chieh Rachel
Gao Yuan Hui
Chiang Hui Lin
Kwek Shi Qi
Rida Fatima Minhaj
Tong Wai Ning, Esther
Yap Suan Chee Kirby*
Yin Li

Cello

Chee Guan Yuan, Lubin
Lee Kai Lin
Lim Ao Jun, Joel
Tey Cheng Suan, Ashley
Tian Xindi**

Trumpet

Jordan Chua Wei Teck**
Sun Yu Pei

Horn

Allard Quek*
Jamie Oon Yee Chern**
Lim Hao Xiang, Sean
Yan Jie Jun

Percussion

Poon Kay Chun, Lexton
Quek Ming Yi

Harp

Madelaine Chong Zhia Chee^

**Principal players, ** Section Leaders, ^Guest Players*

EVENING CONCERT PROGRAMME NOTES

Barber of Seville (Overture)

Gioachino Rossini

Gioachino Rossini was a prolific composer and regarded as the greatest Italian composer of his time who transformed Italian opera. The two-act opera follows the adventures of Figaro, a barber, as he assists young Count Almaviva in prising the beautiful Rosina away from her lecherous guardian Dr Bartolo. The overture begins slowly in E major and bounces between forte chords and softer and sweet tunes. The introduction is then led with a fast and cheery tune in E minor with two distinct themes repeated. The famous “Rossini crescendo” appears when the themes are repeated. The piece then concludes in an exciting fashion that sets the mood as one full of humour and spirit.

Violin Concerto No. 1 in A major

Camille Saint-Saëns

Camille Saint-Saëns was a notable pioneer of French music and was known for his symphonic poems. His Violin Concerto No. 1 is the first out of the set of works he composed for Spanish Violinist Pablo de Sarasate and the second violin concerto that Saint-Saëns composed. Throughout the concerto, there is a cyclic development of themes, inventive formal compression and several of Saint-Saëns' characteristic progressive traits. While the concerto unconventionally only has one movement, the piece resembles a typical concerto structure starting with a bright and gracefully confident Allegro section, followed by a soulful elegant Andante section and a dazzling closing section which reinforces and reorders the themes.

Symphony No. 2

Johannes Brahms

Johannes Brahms was a German composer and pianist who is regarded as the master of the symphonic and sonata style. Composed in the summer of 1877, Johannes Brahms' lyrical and poignant second symphony is recognized for its idyllic pastoralism, a reflection of the peaceful and picturesque nature of rural life. Likely inspired by his stay at Pörschach (a small Austrian village on Lake Wörth) that summer, the symphony embodies the passion and intensity of the Romantic era of music. Despite its idyllic nature, it plays with the juxtaposition of “light” and “dark” music. Lifting melodies reminiscent of the beautiful countryside are intricately weaved together with a melancholic and unsettling presence.

The first movement begins with the gentle rocking of the cellos and double basses, much like a paddle dipping into Lake Wörth. Variations of the beginning three-note theme carry through the winds and brasses. Tinted with melancholy, this is a subtle reference to another prominent work by Brahms – Wiegenlied, or lullaby.

EVENING CONCERT MUSICIANS

Violin I

Chan Yun Kai
Chew Weh**
Jiang Xing Kai
Jiang Yu Chen
Loi Si Xian*
Wee Jia Tong Amanda
Wong Yii, Ethan

Violin II

Chua Xin Yi
Chloe Toh
Goh Ka Hui
Ryan Tang Li Yen
Shi Fangxin
Yunseo Jung

Viola

Neo Wei Qing*
Ng Tze Yang
Tan Hao Yi

Cello

Au Pei-Wen, Tamara
Elizabeth Chew
Jiang Yutong
Lau Yun Xi*
Ng Xing Yu

Double Bass

Kenji Koh Kiang Ee
Neo Minqi Rachel
Pan Jiaying*

Flute

Gail Gay
Sim Kee Pang

Oboe

Ng Wei Xiang
Leow Rui Qing^

Clarinet

Jin Mei Xuan*
Tan Yuxuan

Bassoon

Cerisse Cheng
Rachel Ng

Horn

Javon Teo Tze Kai
Lee Mung Liang Ryan
Lim Hao Shen, Keith
Roy Ang

Trumpet

Chan Yong Tat*
Quek Yu Chern**

Trombone

Chen Hong
Ng Avery
Ong Min Xian

Tuba

Jun-Jia Liu

Percussion

Malcolm Low

**Principal players, ** Section Leaders, ^Guest Players*

BEHIND THE SCENES



Members' thoughts on

BRAHMS SYMPHONY NO. 2

"I love playing Brahms' symphonies because of how much emotion he puts into the four pieces."

- Ng Tze Yang, Viola



"The beauty of Brahms is staying true to the classical form and composing through his feelings."

- Gail Gay, Flute

"While Brahms' Symphony No. 2 is frequently described as "sunny" and "cheerful", the timpani, along with the lower brass, are given the role of interjecting some form of shadows and darkness in the first two movements."

- Malcolm Low, Timpani



"I really like how you can hear Brahms' lullaby scattered throughout the first movement. Towards the end, the brasses play some really exciting parts that cover the whole orchestra."

- Ong Min Xian, Trombone

Members' thoughts on
**BEETHOVEN
SYMPHONY NO. 7**



"Personally, Beethoven Symphony No. 2 feels like a metaphor for the ongoing revival of the music scene after the lull of the COVID-19 pandemic."

- Jamie Oon and Allard Quek , Horn

"For eight minutes, you will hear the world and music in perfect sync, mutual imitation. Sometimes you don't even understand what you're listening to until it ends. It becomes quiet, and only then do you realize what a magical moment you've had, kind of like waking up."

- Evan Xia, Clarinet





"In general, the lively theme really relates to the theme of emerging from darker times, as there are sections which transition from more uncertain and more tension, and jubilation when such tension is resolved."

- Damien Chew, Double Bass

"The entire symphony to me is elegant in its simplicity, and yet it's such a complex thing when we're trying to bring it all together as well. For me, playing this piece reminds me of the many thousands of orchestra musicians who've interpreted this symphony over the years, and so I think it's quite humbling but also exciting to see how NUSSO and Mr Lim offer our own interpretation of it."

- Lexton Poon, Timpani





CREDITS

Artistic Director:	Mr Lim Soon Lee
Assistant Conductor & Violin I Tutor:	Mr Foo Say Ming
Violin II Tutor:	Ms Cindy Yan Man
Viola Tutor:	Mr Lim Chun
Cello Tutor:	Ms Melissa Ong
Double Bass Tutor:	Mr Julian Li
Flute Tutor:	Ms Carolin Ralser
Oboe Tutor:	Mr Tay Kai Tze
Clarinet Tutor:	Mr Desmond Chow
Bassoon Tutor:	Ms Emerald Chee
Horn Tutor:	Mr Gao Jian
Trumpet Tutor:	Mr Lau Wenrong
Trombone Tutor:	Mr Samuel Armstrong
Tuba Tutor:	Mr Aaron Yong
Harp Tutor:	Ms Huang Yu-Hsin
Percussion Tutor:	Mr Joachim Theodore Lim
CFA Group Manager:	Sing Moh Li

NUS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



The Orchestra was formally established as the NUS Concert Orchestra in 1979 under the auspices of the former University of Singapore and the directorship of Mr Paul Abisheganaden. Inaugurated as the NUS Symphony Orchestra in 1995, its beginnings can be traced back to the 1920s in the form of a Chamber Ensemble.

With over 100 musicians from across the university's different faculties, the NUS Symphony Orchestra (NUSSO) provides undergraduates with the opportunity to pursue their musical interests while promoting an appreciation for the arts in Singapore. Its central mission is to be an education-centric orchestra, focused on cultivating a culture of excellence through the practice of music and advocating orchestral music to the public.

NUSSO has performed concerts in several NUS Arts Festivals, and has taken part in numerous international competitions and festivals. NUSSO took part in the 2016 Festival Orchestre Giovanili (Florence Youth Festival) in Italy, and in 2013, participated in the prestigious Summa Cum Laude International Festival, claiming 2nd place. Through its diverse repertoire, the orchestra has forged a reputation both locally and internationally.



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 21/22



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Loi Si Xian

Vice Presidents:

Neo Wei Qing

Jin Mei Xuan

General Secretary/ Treasurer:

Oh Wan Jenn, Tanya

Logistics and Resource:

Tong Wai Ning Esther

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Chua Xin Yi
Jiang Yuchen
Lian Ko-Shyan
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Roy Ang Wei Heng
Wee Jia Tong Amanda

Logistics

Damien Chew
Elizabeth Chew
Gao Yuanhui
Ngan Chung Pui, Louisa
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Repertoire

Jiang Xing Kai
Jordan Chua Wei Teck
Keith Low Jun
Ng Zhen Teng
Pan Jiaying
Quek Ming Yi
Rachael Zhang Lewen



ABOUT NUS ARTS FESTIVAL

The NUS Arts Festival was first staged in 1998, primarily as a showcase of student talents. As part of NUS' centenary celebrations in 2006, the Festival was relaunched and expanded to incorporate faculty and practising local and international artists alongside the best student performers.

NUS Arts Festival is the largest arts event on campus, presented each year in March with collaborative practice at the heart of its programming.

Working with local and international practitioners, our student artists are encouraged to avail themselves to the content-rich environment within the University, grounding their work in deep knowledge and using it as the basis of the development process.

Each edition of the Festival is crafted with a core theme that responds to contemporary issues and facilitates the integration of research and learning as part of the artistic process, in addition to showcasing performances with mass appeal.

Now in its second decade, the NUS Arts Festival draws artists and collaborators from across campus and around the world. It is known for conceptually challenging pieces that speak to both the creative and academic output of NUS.

nusartsfestival.com

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NUS CENTRE FOR THE ARTS

NUS Centre For the Arts (CFA) comprises the NUS Museum and NUS Baba House; the University Cultural Centre, a world class performing arts centre; and a Talent Development and Programming unit that oversees 20 student arts excellence groups in music, dance, theatre and film. On campus and beyond, we take pride in providing the opportunities for the appreciation of the arts.



We seek to champion creative possibilities and inspire strong communities through programming, exhibitions, workshops and outreach such as the university's flagship arts event, the NUS Arts Festival and Singapore's longest running arts outreach programme, the ExxonMobil Campus Concerts.



UNIVERSITY CULTURAL CENTRE

As a high-grade, flexible performance venue nestled in the grounds of a premier university, the University Cultural Centre is a consistently sought-after venue. It operates year-round, hosting key University events, external bookings and CFA's own programming. The Hall and Theatre have hosted numerous political and cultural leaders, thinkers and well-known artists and musicians.

In late 2017, the UCC underwent an extensive renovation to ensure that it continues to be operationally and environmentally efficient and offers a high standard of service.

To enquire about hosting an event at the UCC, please contact the Venues Team (uccvenues@nus.edu.sg).



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