

**Press Release (6 pages total)**

## **THE RITE OF SPRING: A People's Stravinsky**

Presented by **The Philharmonic Orchestra, Singapore & The ARTS FISSION Company**

In Collaboration with Esplanade - Theatres on the Bay

Saturday 22 June 2013 | 7.30 pm | Esplanade Concert Hall

(60 minutes, no intermission)

To mark the centennial year of Stravinsky's iconic work, *The Rite of Spring* : A People's Stravinsky is the first collaboration between two Cultural Medallion recipients - Maestro Lim Yau and Choreographer Angela Liong.

*A People's Stravinsky* reinterprets the original work with staging that highlights people from the community in dramatic roles. It incorporates the creative energies of the elderly, children, and volunteers from the community with professional dancers and musicians, making it an exciting interdisciplinary and multi-generational artistic endeavor.

The 1913 original work was created to capture the culture and rituals of old Russian rural communities. The reinterpretation of *The Rite of Spring* in the 21<sup>st</sup> century brings back the narratives of the community, grounding the iconic piece through an Asian perspective with rhythms of the seasons of life.

### **Ticketing Information**

**Ticket Prices:**           **\$26 | \$21 | \$17**

Concessions and Discounts

- 10% discount for Friends of ARTS FISSION, Senior Citizens, NSF, Students, and PASSION Card members (all categories)

**Throughout ticket sales period**

- 15% discount with purchase of 4 or more tickets of the same category

**Schools** may apply to the Tote Board Arts Grant for a 50% subsidy on all ticket prices.

For bookings, please call the Esplanade Box Office at 6828 8389 or email [boxoffice@esplanade.com](mailto:boxoffice@esplanade.com)

Book Now! | [www.sistic.com.sg](http://www.sistic.com.sg)

Tickets are available from Esplanade Box Office and SISTIC's authorised agents

For phone bookings, please call SISTIC hotline: 6348 5555

*\*A SISTIC booking fee applies for each ticket.*

### **The Rite of Spring : A Community Photography Showcase | 15 – 21 June, Library@Esplanade**

A group of community photographers came together to chronicle through photos, the story of this special collaboration. This photography showcase presents a unique perspective of the community engagement process – an intimate look at the ordinary people who make this production truly A People's Stravinsky.

For more information, please visit [www.artsfission.org](http://www.artsfission.org)

For media enquiries, please contact Su-Lin at [sulin@artswok.com](mailto:sulin@artswok.com), hp: 9747-2924

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### Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*

The year 2013 marks **the centennial year** of Igor Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*, which premiered in Paris in 1913. The piece is recognised as an iconic work in the history of music, and more specifically, one that is associated with the revolution of musical norms: it transformed the way people thought about music and ballet, and more importantly, the expectations of what music and ballet should be.

While celebrating the timelessness of *The Rite of Spring*'s durable legacy and the universality of its themes, this production is conceptualised in its original spirit of innovation, and will feature the element of contemporary dance through an enterprising collaboration between **The Philharmonic Orchestra and The ARTS FISSION Company**.

### A Community-Centred Approach

The Philharmonic Orchestra and The ARTS FISSION Company will pursue a production of *The Rite of Spring* that brings renewed relevance to its Singaporean audience. This will be fulfilled through a **community-centred performance approach** that involves non-conventional performers alongside the musicians and dancers of both companies.

Amidst notions of music and dance as "high art" in society, this project will go against the grain to relocate a "People's Stravinsky" - grounded in **the collaboration between community performers, musicians and dancers, integrating the creative energies of all in an inter-disciplinary and multi-generational artistic endeavor**.

Engagement and involvement of communities include:

- Workshops for seniors at NTUC Eldercare and Henderson Senior Citizens' Home, and AWWA Seniors Activity Centre and AWWA Community Home for Senior Citizens
- Seniors performing in *The Rite of Spring: A People's Stravinsky*
- Children from ARTS FISSION's dance programme performing in the production
- Seamstresses/mothers sewing individually made costumes for seniors, children and dancers
- Volunteers from Senior Citizens' Activity Centres and Homes, and the community
- Student volunteers from LASALLE-SIA College of the Arts (Dance Department) and Ngee Ann Polytechnic (Arts Business Management)
- A photography showcase curated and contributed by community photographers

**\*The Rite of Spring : A Community Photography Showcase will be held at:**

a. Sat 15 June – Fri 21 June, 11am-9pm at the Library@Esplanade

b. Sat 22 June, 6.30pm at the Esplanade Concert Hall Stalls Foyer (open only to ticket holders of the performance)

- There will be **a talk** by Maestro Lim Yau and Choreographer Angela Liong on Sun 16 June, 3 – 4 pm at library@esplanade. In a highly interactive session, they will share their thoughts on their creative process as well as introduce elements of the production such as the costumes, music and creative movement. Admission is free and is open to the public.

## **An Interview with the Creators of *The Rite of Spring: A People's Stravinsky***

Lim Yau, Music Director & Conductor | Angela Liong, Choreographer & Stage Director

### **Why is this an important collaboration between The Philharmonic Orchestra (TPO) and The ARTS FISSION Company (AF)?**

Lim Yau: In performing *The Rite of Spring*, TPO brings to a satisfying close its *100 Years Later* series, in which each of the three major ballets by Igor Stravinsky is honoured by having a performance presented on its respective centenary. In this last and most iconic of the three works, TPO looks to present it in its original form as a dance, and has sought to working with a dance company to this end. It is important for us to collaborate with AF's Artistic Director Angela Liong, who brings not just her edgy choreography to this project, but her unique eye as a chronicler of the modern Asian identity as well.

On a larger scale, this collaboration between dance and music is essential as sadly, it seems that it is increasingly harder to find dance productions in Singapore that is presented with a live orchestra. This collaboration seeks to renew this balance between the two mediums, as both companies recognise that the synergy between the musician and the dancer is vital to the quality of the performance.

Angela: It takes opportune timing combined with much effort and resources for an orchestra and a dance company to collaborate on a project. Just the sheer number of performers involved will put this project on a Herculean scale!

At the same time, due to limited resources, it is a rare act in Singapore for a contemporary dance company to collaborate with a full orchestra. Hence to be able to work with The Philharmonic Orchestra, and especially under the music direction of the experienced and well-respected conductor Lim Yau is truly an artistic treat for ARTS FISSION.

### **Why is *The Rite of Spring* an important piece of work?**

Lim Yau: No other piece of western Classical music has shaped 20th century aesthetic in such a profound way as the *Rite* has. Without precedent, Stravinsky created a work that defied what a ballet, much less an orchestral work, should sound like. It is a beast of a work that is driven by rhythmic vigour and a forceful vitality that still influences how composers today think of music, and how audiences hear it. Quite simply, the *Rite* came from nowhere, and changed everything.

Angela: The historic and artistic background of the original work marked a new milestone and breakthrough in contemporary music and dance making for the 20th century. The fact that *The Rite of Spring* still occupies an important place in most orchestras and dance companies' repertoire after 100 years speaks for itself.

### **How are you adapting or reinterpreting *The Rite of Spring*, and what can audiences expect?**

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Lim Yau: Come to find out!

Angela: In terms of staging the dance, I take an Asian perspective to interpret the ritual of Spring in our culture. I am using the 24 seasonal markers in the ancient Chinese lunisolar calendar to deconstruct the original work into visually engaging episodes. The rich shades of red, symbolic of blood, will feature prominently in dramatic costumes and hand props. Besides professional dancers, I will also be working with an intergenerational cast that involves children and elderly performers to highlight the concept of regeneration and the cycles of Nature.

### **How is this production going to be 'A People's Stravinsky'?**

Angela: To call this production 'A People's Stravinsky', the creative approach is first and foremost to examine how the professional artists could involve people from all walks of life and work with them in a meaningful way from the preparatory stage of the performance to the final presentation at the Concert Hall.

We selected children from our dance enrichment program to play the young virgins from the original ballet. We also contacted various senior homes and activity centres to work with groups of seniors to play the venerable elders in the performance.

In order to prepare the senior performers, we designed dance-theatre workshops to introduce them to Stravinsky's music and expose them to the idea of contemporary dance theatre. We are also reaching out to people from all walks of life to get involved in various production aspects of the performance.

Therefore it is truly 'A People's Stravinsky' as it is driven by professional artists but actively involving the community in an inter-generational and meaningful collaboration.

### **What impact would you like this production to have on the audience?**

Lim Yau: That one hundred years later, audiences who are familiar with the work will experience the enduring vitality of the *Rite* in its original form. For audiences who are new to classical music, this production offers a chance to be drawn into Stravinsky's extraordinary sound world.

On top of this, we invite the audience to challenge and add to their palate with the novel combination of artistic elements that this collaborative production offers.

Angela: I hope the audience will come away with the impression of how the performing arts has the capacity to bring different people in the community together and enable meaningful interaction. That good art can inspire and enrich everyday life, and touch people no matter what experience or background they come from.

## Biographies

### **The Philharmonic Orchestra (Singapore)** **Lim Yau I Music Director and Conductor**

Lim Yau's status as Singapore's preeminent conductor is underpinned by a distinguished and enduring career. In addition to a long association with the Singapore Symphony Orchestra since its founding, Lim Yau's work in choral music, opera, ballet, and contemporary music remains unparalleled. He is a Cultural Medallion recipient and in 2011 was conferred the COMPASS Lifetime Achievement Award. As opera and ballet conductor, Lim Yau remains Singapore's most prolific conductor of the genre, having conducted more than 20 opera and ballet productions with the Singapore Lyric Opera, Singapore Dance Theatre, among others.

Currently Head of Music at Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, Lim Yau is devoted to the nurturing and development of young musicians. Simultaneously he continues his association with the Singapore Symphony Chorus as its Choral Director.

### **The Philharmonic Orchestra (Singapore)**

The Philharmonic Orchestra (Singapore), formerly the Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra is a project initiated by Maestro Lim Yau in 1998. The orchestra comprises young adults who are committed to training and developing as ensemble musicians, through the study and performance of seminal orchestral literature.

With a questing spirit, the orchestra has placed unique and innovative combinations at the forefront of its programming. Since its inaugural concert in 2002, the orchestra has undertaken the challenging and exciting task of staging several symphony cycles. These include the cycles of Beethoven based on Jonathan Del Mar's edition (2003), Schumann (2004), Schubert (2005) and Singapore's first Sibelius cycle (2007/8). Joined by NAC Young Artist Lim Yan, TPO most recently presented Beethoven's Piano Concerto cycle (2012)-- the first in Singapore to feature a Singaporean pianist.

An avid advocate of outreach, TPO's recent seasons include its *Papa Haydn and You* series, narrated performances of *Stravinsky's 100 Years Later* series (*Firebird* in 2010 and *Petrushka* in 2011), as well as a full scale production of Stravinsky's *Soldier's Tale*. Through its collaborations with actors and presenters, such explorations of orchestral repertoire through theatrical elements have created an accessible concert format for TPO's audiences.

Born of its early activities as a pit orchestra, TPO has also received good reviews for its work in productions by the Singapore Dance Theatre and Singapore Lyric Opera in over 15 productions between 1999 and 2008. On the invitation of *Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay*, TPO has also accompanied Richard Einhorn's *Voices of Light* (music set to the 1928 silent film, Joan of Arc), and other artistes such as K.D. Lang, Omara Portuondo, Aska and David Foster. More recently, the orchestra has also accompanied world-renowned tenor, Andrea Bocelli at *YTL's Concert of Celebration 2010*.

Celebrating its tenth anniversary this year, TPO aims to continue to flourish as both a performing entity and a meeting point for dedicated musicians and to serve Singapore's orchestra scene for many years to come.

## **The ARTS FISSION Company**

### **Angela Liong | Choreographer & Stage Director**

A Cultural Medallion winner in 2009, Angela is an active contemporary dance advocate and artist. She was invited to set up and head Singapore's first professional full-time dance diploma programme at Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts in 1989. She was the Dean of the School of Performing Arts at LASALLE-SIA College of the Arts in 1998 and implemented Singapore's first dance degree programme in affiliation with Queensland University of Technology (QUT).

The pioneering spirit of Angela remains strong as she now sets new goals in sustaining professional dance practice in Singapore by maintaining ARTS FISSION as one of a few local fulltime operating dance companies. At the same time, she sets new benchmarks by raising the quality of creative expression that attracts international attention.

Angela has been continuously providing her expertise to the National Arts Council and other arts education and cultural organisations in Singapore since 1984 and served as a member of the Singapore sub-committee on culture and information for UNESCO.

## **The ARTS FISSION Company**

The ARTS FISSION COMPANY is a Singapore-based dance laboratory with the vision to rekindle the human spirit with a new genre of dance theatre informed by Asian traditions, cultures, and aesthetics. Poised in Southeast Asia, ARTS FISSION creates its dance works in sync with the pulses of new Asia.

Many of ARTS FISSION's original creations are acute responses to the emerging contemporary Asian identity amidst the rapid developing urban environment. These works aim to experiment and reinvent vernacular gesture and movement into a new dance vocabulary that cross-references between urban Asia and old Asia. The 18-year old company has presented over 65 full-length productions locally and internationally to date.

Guided by the vision of artistic director Angela Liong, the company is also engaged in a wide range of diverse community outreach projects that connects everyday life to the arts. In 2009, a series of specially designed movement for elderly was initiated with the support of the Community Participatory Grant from National Arts Council (NAC). The programme, now third year in its running, focuses on rekindling the individual spirits of the elderly through creative dance movement. Through these sessions, the elderly have the opportunity to perform familiar daily actions/gestures in the dance context that would require them to move with intent and acute kinetic awareness.

**For more information, and media enquiries, please contact: [sulin@artswok.com](mailto:sulin@artswok.com), hp: 9747-2924**

