



press release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Esplanade Marks 20th Anniversary with *PopLore – A Year of Singapore Popular Music*



SINGAPORE, 20 Jan 2022 – As part of Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay’s 20th anniversary celebrations, the centre presents *PopLore – A Year of Singapore Popular Music*, a year-long exploration of Singapore’s epic, storied and vibrant popular music from the 1960s to the present and beyond.

With a focus on the many popular music forms in English, Chinese, Malay and Tamil, *PopLore* presents a series of live concerts from January to December 2022, featuring a roster of luminaries in the Singapore music scene such as Dick Lee, Jeremy Monteiro, Marcus Chin and Najip Ali, as well as younger artists including Charlie Lim, Fauzie Laily, Izzathy Halil, Nathan Hartono, Olivia Ong, Shabir and The Freshman. To enrich the experience for audiences and to raise awareness of the history and future possibilities of Singapore’s popular music, the series will also feature podcasts, videos and an exhibition at Esplanade on the various cultural forces, behind-the-scenes players and live music venues which shaped the scene. Produced in consultation with music industry veteran Lim Sek and emerging from the

seismic disruption to the scene that is COVID-19, *PopLore* celebrates the power of music across generations, language and geography, and seeks to spur conversations and reflection on the way forward.

Said Melissa Poon, Programmer, The Esplanade Co Ltd, “As Singapore’s national performing arts centre, we have always been clear that what we do through the arts at Esplanade should uplift spirits, offer hope, and celebrate the stories that tie us together. As we mark our milestone 20th anniversary during these unprecedented times, we want to do something to galvanise the music scene which has been badly hit by the pandemic and to renew a sense of community after a prolonged period of being physically apart for many of us. With *PopLore*, we come together to celebrate and raise appreciation for Singapore popular music and its history, and document popular Singapore music across generations and cultures, sharing insights that will allow us to build up the music scene of the future.”

Said Lim Sek, creative consultant for *PopLore*, “Through concerts, podcasts and an exhibition, *PopLore* hopes to connect the past, present and future of Singapore popular music. Hopefully this common platform will let the different generations of music talents appreciate each other more and move together towards a future where our music talents can gain strong collective support, not only from Singaporeans, but also the international community.

“For 20 years, through its creative programming, Esplanade has played an important part in the promotion and growth of Singapore popular music in all languages and genres. This is admirable and inspiring, and makes it a suitable central source for anyone who wants to know more about Singapore popular music. Hopefully, with the many events associated with *Poplore*, we can generate a renewed interest in Singapore pop music.”

Live concerts from January to December 2022

PopLore kicked off on 1 Jan 2022 as Malay pop icons past and present rang in the new year in ***Gemilang***, a celebratory yet intimate showcase in the Esplanade Concert Hall hosted by Najip Ali and Nurul Aini, with performances by well-loved Singapore artists including Fauzie Laily, Hyrul Anuar, Izzathy Halil, Huda Raman and more. On 12 Feb, ***XingPop 2.0***, presented as part of *Huayi – Chinese Festival of Arts*, celebrates the growth of Singapore’s Mandarin pop music scene by tracing the creative journeys and innovations of musical trailblazers in the past two decades. This is a sequel to the first *XingPop* concert held as part of Esplanade’s *Opening Festival* in 2002 and will feature performances by homegrown talents including Olivia Ong, Nathan Hartono, The Freshman, Hong Junyang and many more.

In March 2022, as part of *A Date With Friends*, three concerts—performed in English, Mandarin and Malay—celebrate Singapore’s rich music legacy. ***Blast from the Past*** will be hosted by esteemed Rediffusion DJ and local television personality, Larry Lai, and brings together members of three extraordinary groups: John and Raymond of The Crescendos, brothers Mel and Joe Ferdinands and Peter Diaz, singer, guitarist and songwriter for the rock and roll quartet The October Cherries (also known as Singapore’s very own Beatles). ***Getai in Retrospect*** celebrates the unique legacy of *getai* through music, storytelling and multimedia presentations. Hosted by household names Marcus Chin and Lee Pei Fen, the concert will feature 10 *getai* artists across generations including veterans Huang Qing Yuan, Lin Ru Ping and Li Jin Cai, alongside established artists Yuan Jin, Josephine Lam and Jason Chung, as well as new generation artists 2Z Sisters and Anddi Goh. In ***Malam Pop Yeh Yeh***, veteran comedian Husin Saaban will host a groovy concert featuring favourite pop yeh yeh tunes performed by local icons Asmuri, June Abdullah and Asmah Atan, alongside new generation pop yeh yeh singer Rudi Salim, backed by band The Wismas II.

The next in the *PopLore* series features Dick Lee, one of Singapore’s most prolific and cherished singer composers. ***Dick Lee with Omnitones ft. Third Degree*** sees Lee working with Omnitones and featuring vocal trio Third Degree. Through the project, Lee hopes to inspire and guide these young musicians through a novel music adventure in a brand-new era of music making. The concert will showcase new music that was specially created with the group, as well as the wonderful songs that Lee has given us through the decades. In ***45 RPM – Jeremy’s Jazz Journal***, Singapore’s “King of Swing”, Jeremy Monteiro, takes to the stage with friends and music collaborators to celebrate 45 years of music-making. This musical journey charts the stories behind memorable career peaks and shares precious lessons gained from the unexpected twists and turns towards international accolades.

In the later part of 2022, ***Charlie Lim & featured guest artists*** sees one of Singapore’s most promising young artists helm a concert that will be focused on original music and that puts the spotlight on the creative process of songwriting. Lim and his band The Mothership will be performing alongside a to-be-revealed collective of artists. In November, as part of ***Kalaa Utsavam – Indian Festival of Arts***, popular singers Shabir and Murali Krishnan will be part of a concert that chronicles the journey of Singapore Indian music and bands, featuring well-loved Tamil and Hindi tunes.

Finally, to round up Esplanade’s 20th anniversary celebrations at *PopLore*, a ***New Year’s Eve performance*** at the Esplanade Outdoor Theatre will showcase the next wave of Singapore’s best and brightest acts, whom we can expect to make an impact in the music scene from 2023.

Documentary Projects

As part of *PopLore*, Esplanade will also launch several documentary projects that will serve as a rich repository of content on Singapore pop music, providing a reference that will be archived on the *PopLore* microsite (www.esplanade.com/poplore) for fans, the curious and future generations.

PopLore: Stories of Singapore Pop is a seven-episode podcast series about the myriad influences and the highs and lows of Singapore popular music across cultures, subcultures and time periods, as well as looks ahead to the music ecosystem of the future. The series features insights from over 25 industry figures including veteran broadcaster Brian Richmond, singer Rahimah Rahim, singer-songwriter Mohamed Raffee, composer Li Si Song, singer-songwriter Dick Lee and musician-producer Joe Ng of The Padres. The first episode of the series, hosted by veteran music producer Lim Sek, will be released on 20 Jan 2022, and the series will be available on *Esplanade Offstage* (www.esplanade.com/offstage), Spotify, Apple Podcasts and on Mediacorp's meLISTEN platform. The concluding episode of the series will be hosted by singer-songwriter weish and co-presented with Mediacorp's online audio stream, indiego.

Home Grooves is a year-long exhibition at the Esplanade Concourse from August 2022 to July 2023, that will explore the history and evolution of music venues in Singapore through the decades, from the 1960s to the present. Esplanade will launch a public call in March 2022 to crowdsource for memorabilia and memories relating to popular live music venues of yesteryear that can be showcased in the exhibition.

In August, Esplanade will also be launching a video series that demystifies Singapore pop for new audiences, as well as a separate package of educator resources on Singapore pop for Upper Primary and Lower Secondary level. Look out for all the documentary and educational content on [Esplanade Offstage](http://www.esplanade.com/offstage).

PopLore – A Year of Singapore Popular Music is made possible with the generous support of Principal Sponsor **UFC Refresh**.

About Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay

Esplanade is Singapore's national performing arts centre. It hosts a year-round line-up of about 3,500 live performances and activities presented by Esplanade, its partners and hirers. Esplanade also brings the arts virtually to audiences in Singapore and beyond, through its diverse range of digital programmes on [Esplanade Offstage](#), an all-access backstage pass to the performing arts and guide to Singapore and Asian arts and culture, with videos, podcasts, articles, quizzes and resources.

As an arts centre for everyone, Esplanade also creates opportunities for seniors, youth, children and underserved communities to experience the arts. More than 70% of the shows that take place each year at the centre are free for all to enjoy.

The centre works in close partnership with local, regional and international artists to develop artistic capabilities and content, push artistic boundaries and engage audiences. Esplanade supports the creation of artistic content by commissioning and producing new Singapore and Asian work for the international stage. It also develops technical capabilities for the industry nationally.

Turning 20 in 2022, Esplanade marks the occasion with a year-long celebration themed *20 and Beyond: Keeping the Lights On*. In addition to the presentations of its year-long festivals, programme series, and special initiatives and events, there will also be a season of new works by Singapore and Asian artists specially commissioned for the arts centre's 20th anniversary and official opening of its newest venue, Singtel Waterfront Theatre.

Esplanade –Theatres on the Bay is operated by The Esplanade Co Ltd (TECL), which is a not-for-profit organisation, a registered Charity and an Institution of a Public Character. The Charity Council awarded TECL the Charity Governance Award – Special Commendation for Clarity of Strategy in 2016, and the Charity Transparency Award for four consecutive years since 2016. Esplanade is Singapore's first Dementia-Friendly Arts Venue and a certified Dementia Go-To Point, as well as a Guide-dog Friendly centre.

TECL receives funding support from Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth and its Community Programmes are supported by Tote Board Family, comprising Tote Board, Singapore Pools and Singapore Turf Club.

Visit Esplanade.com for more information.

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Issued by *The Esplanade Co Ltd*.

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Annexe

PopLore – A Year of Singapore Popular Music



Epic, storied and vibrant, Singapore's popular music from the 1960s to the present and beyond is the subject of this year-long exploration, presented from Jan to Dec 2022 to mark Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay's 20th anniversary.

With a focus on the many popular music forms in English, Chinese, Malay and Tamil, *PopLore* presents a series of 10 live concerts featuring a roster of luminaries such as Dick Lee, Jeremy Monteiro, Najip Ali, Charlie Lim, Shabir and The Freshman as well as the stars of tomorrow; along with podcasts, videos and an exhibition at Esplanade on the various cultural forces, producers and venues which shaped the scene. Produced in consultation with music industry veteran Lim Sek and emerging from the seismic disruption to the scene that is COVID-19, *PopLore* celebrates the power of music across generations, language and geography, and seeks to spur conversations and reflection on the way forward.

Visit www.esplanade.com/poplore for more information.

LIVE CONCERTS

XingPop 2.0
Various Artists (Singapore)
12 Feb 2022, Sat, 7.30pm
Esplanade Concert Hall



Singapore's Mandarin pop music scene has flourished over the years, with many local artists rising to the ranks of regional and international household names. Celebrate this heartening growth with *XingPop 2.0*— a sequel to the first *XingPop* concert held as part of Esplanade's Opening Festival in 2002.

Similar to how its predecessor paid homage to iconic tunes from the '80s *xinyao* era until the early 2000s, *XingPop 2.0* traces the creative journeys and innovations of musical trailblazers in the past two decades. Catch the performances of homegrown talents including Olivia Ong, Nathan Hartono, The Freshman, Hong Junyang, Desmond Ng, Ruth Kueo, StellaVee, Nat Wu, Tingzhi Hz and Isaac Yong.

Apart from featured artists, the spotlight will also be cast on “unsung heroes” who have played a pivotal role in placing Singapore on the regional map for Mandarin pop music. These include songwriters, music directors and producers like Lee Si Song, Goh Kheng Long, Jim Lim and Ruth Ling, who will share their experience and insights to shine a light for a new generation of Mandarin pop music talents.

Whether you are an aspiring musician, an ardent supporter of Mandarin pop or a curious observer, hop on the musical bandwagon at *XingPop 2.0*!

(2hrs 15mins, no intermission)
Performed in Mandarin.

Ticket Price: \$48*, \$68^, \$88^

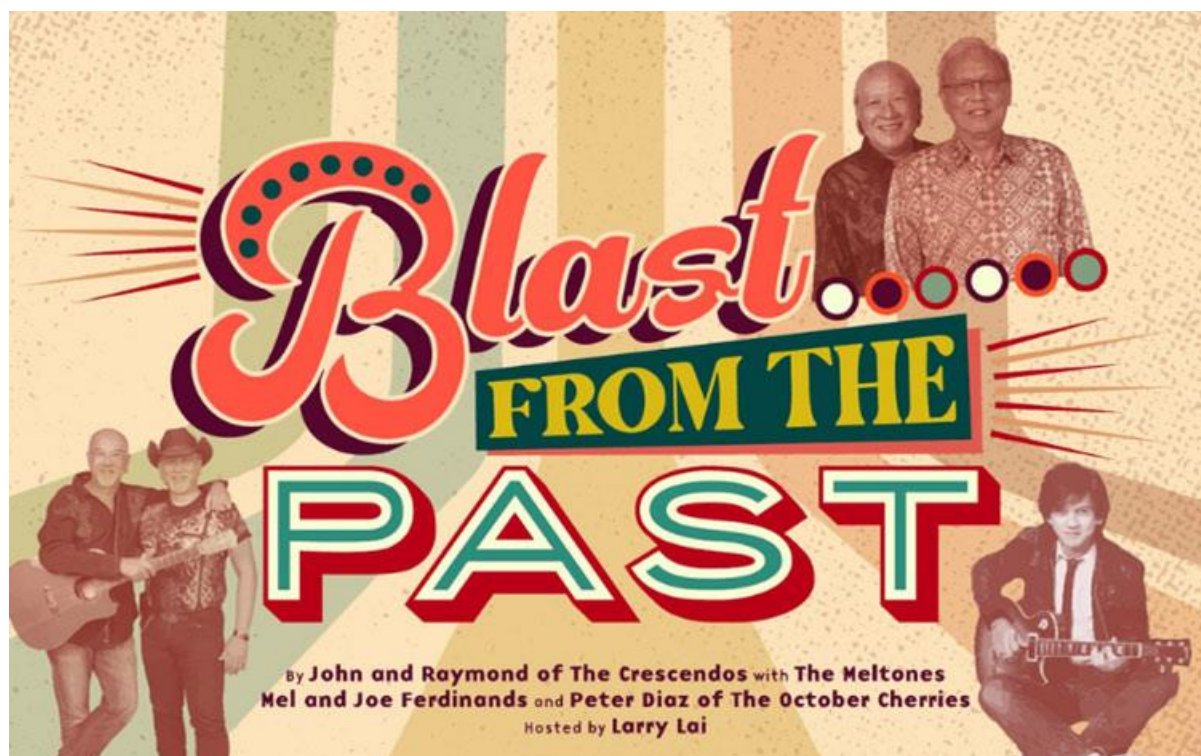
*Limited concessions for students, NSFs and seniors: \$40

Concession for PWDs: \$40

^*Esplanade&Me* Special
Black: 15% savings

White: 10% savings
Discover: 5% savings (limited tickets)

Blast From the Past
Raymond and John of The Crescendos with The Meltones, Mel and Joe Ferdinands and Peter Diaz of The October Cherries (Singapore)
3 Mar 2022, Thu, 7.30pm
Esplanade Concert Hall



Get a *Blast From the Past* with this one-night-only musical showcase of the inimitable talents that have shaped Singapore's rich music legacy! Hosted by esteemed Rediffusion DJ and local television personality, Larry Lai, this concert brings together members of three extraordinary groups: John and Raymond of The Crescendos, Singapore's first pop band to be signed by an international label; brothers Mel and Joe Ferdinands, a folk-rock duo who rose to fame through Radio Television Singapore's *Talentine* in 1971; and Peter Diaz, singer, guitarist and songwriter for the rock and roll quartet The October Cherries (also known as Singapore's very own Beatles). This extravaganza will also feature visuals from the artists' own archives alongside video interviews.

(1hr 30mins, no intermission)
Performed in English.

Ticket Price: \$35, \$45*

*Esplanade&Me Special
Black Card: 15% savings
White Card: 10% savings

JOYears Special
\$26, \$34

Getai in Retrospect
Various Artists (Singapore)
5 Mar 2022, Sat, 7.30pm
Esplanade Concert Hall



Come celebrate the legacy of *getai* through music, storytelling and multimedia presentations!

A literal translation of “song-stage” from Mandarin, *getai* is a unique facet of Chinese culture and heritage in Singapore that comprises live entertainment with open-air performances of song, music and dance, with performers typically utilising Chinese dialects such as Hokkien on stage. Over the last 50 years, *getai* has continued to develop through innovations in stage design and musical offerings, comparable to those of contemporary music concerts.

Hosted by household names Marcus Chin and Lee Pei Fen, *Getai in Retrospect* features ten *getai* artists across generations. Watch veterans such as Huang Qing Yuan, Lin Ru Ping and Li Jin Cai take the stage alongside established artists Yuan Jin, Josephine Lam and Jason Chung, as well as new generation artists 2Z Sisters and Anddi Goh.

A programme of *PopLore*, in celebration of Esplanade's 20th anniversary.
Discover and relive the epic, storied and exhilarating journeys of different generations through Singapore popular music and culture.

(2hr 15mins, no intermission)
Performed in Mandarin & various dialects.

Ticket Price: \$35, \$45*

*Esplanade&Me Special
Black Card: 15% savings
White Card: 10% savings

JOYears Special
\$26, \$34

Malam Pop Yeh Yeh

Asmuri of The Hornets, Asmah Atan, June Abdullah, Rudi Salim & The Wismas II (Singapore)

4 Mar 2022, Fri, 8.30pm

Esplanade Concert Hall



Whip out your bell bottoms for a groovy night of your favourite pop yeh yeh tunes! Hosted by veteran comedian Husin Saaban, *Malam Pop Yeh Yeh* features local icons Asmuri, June Abdullah and Asmah Atan, alongside new generation pop yeh yeh singer Rudi Salim, backed by band The Wismas II.

A programme of *PopLore*, in celebration of Esplanade's 20th anniversary.

Discover and relive the epic, storied and exhilarating journeys of different generations through Singapore popular music and culture.

(1hr 30mins, no intermission)

Performed in Malay.

Ticket Price: \$30

Esplanade&Me Special

Black Card: 15% savings

White Card: 10% savings

JOYears Special

\$23

Dick Lee with Omnitones ft. Third Degree
Dick Lee, Omnitones and Third Degree (Singapore)
18 & 19 Jun 2022, Sat & Sun, 7.30pm
Esplanade Concert Hall



Dick Lee continues his illustrious songwriting journey with an exciting new project. Working with Omnitones and featuring vocal trio Third Degree, he hopes to inspire and guide these young musicians through a novel music adventure in a brand-new era of music making.

This concert will showcase the new music that was specially created with the group. Nonetheless, the highlight of the show will still be the wonderful songs that Dick has given us through the decades — songs that propelled him to the forefront as one of Singapore’s most prolific and celebrated singer-composers.

More information on ticket sales to be announced later.

45 RPM – Jeremy's Jazz Journal
Jeremy Monteiro (Singapore)
1 & 2 Jul 2022, Fri & Sat, 7.30pm
Esplanade Concert Hall



You've heard his critically acclaimed recordings and witnessed his awe-inspiring stage performances. Prepare for yet another dazzling show as Jeremy Monteiro takes the stage with friends and music collaborators to celebrate 45 years of music making. This musical journey charts the stories behind memorable career peaks and shares precious lessons gained from the unexpected twists and turns towards international accolades. Along the way, enjoy his career-defining repertoire that makes him the inimitable leader of Singapore's jazz music scene!

More information on ticket sales to be announced later.

Charlie Lim & featured guest artists
Various artists (Singapore)
16 Sep 2022, Fri, 7.30pm
Esplanade Concert Hall



Indulge in musical synergies that unfold at the live concert helmed by Charlie Lim and his band The Mothership, joined by a to-be-revealed collective of artists. Focused on original music, it features rearrangements and performances of one another's songs.

Beyond musical exchange, the artists may also share their personal experiences in songwriting along with insights into their creative processes through candid on-stage conversations.

More information on ticket sales to be announced later.

Information about the *PopLore* concerts for *Kalaa Utsavam – Indian Festival of Arts* and *New Year's Eve* will be released later.

PODCAST

PopLore: Stories of Singapore Pop



A seven-episode podcast series about the myriad influences and the highs and lows of Singapore popular music across cultures, subcultures and time periods, it also looks ahead to the music ecosystem of the future. The series features insights from over 25 industry figures including veteran broadcaster Brian Richmond, singer Rahimah Rahim, singer-songwriter Mohamed Raffee, composer Li Si Song and musician-producer Joe Ng of The Padres. The first episode of the podcast, hosted by veteran producer Lim Sek, will be released on 20 Jan 2022, and the series will be available on *Esplanade Offstage*, Spotify, Apple Podcasts and on Mediacorp's meLISTEN platform. The concluding episode of the series will be hosted by singer-songwriter weish and co-presented with Mediacorp's online audio stream, indiego.