

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Esplanade's *A Tapestry of Sacred Music* 2010 inspires with
the beauty of sacred sounds**

SINGAPORE, 31 March 2010 – Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay presents its second edition of *A Tapestry of Sacred Music* from 23 – 25 April 2010, inviting audiences to experience the sanctity and joy of life as they encounter sacred music from all over the world. The festival presents different forms of sacred music, which are often seen only in places or contexts of worship, in a neutral environment at Esplanade, introducing new sounds and experiences to audiences. The three-day festival, comprising over 30 ticketed and free performances, invites all to allow the artistry of sounds to touch them in its own special way.

Commented Ms Norhayati Yusoff, Programming Officer, The Esplanade Co. Ltd, “Through *A Tapestry of Sacred Music*, we hope that our audiences will learn to appreciate the richness and importance of sacred music, which connects us with our inner selves and the world around us. The festival also provides an opportunity for different ethnic groups to present to Singaporean audiences, traditional ceremonies and rituals deeply rooted in their culture. We want everyone to come to the festival with open hearts and minds, relax, sit back and just enjoy the music!”

To cater to the enthusiastic audience and allow more people to experience the festival's wide range of sacred music, Esplanade has increased the number of ticketed performances from two to three this year. *Invocation of Love* by Tempvs Fvgit (Corsica) will be presented at the Esplanade Concert Hall. The other two performances, *The Wandering Fakirs: The African Sufis of Gujarat* by Sidi Goma (Gujarat) and *Call of the Herdsman – Throat Singers of Tuva* by Huun-Huur-Tu (Tuva), will be held at the Recital Studio. Besides these, there will also be a host of free performances as well as visual arts displays and workshops during the festival for all to enjoy.

Ticketed Programmes

All the way from France, Corsican ensemble Tempvs Fvgit, which has collaborated with French composer Armand Amar on his film music, performs in Singapore for the first time with *Invocation of Love* on 25 April at the Esplanade Concert Hall. Hear them sing in polyphonic harmony – a repertoire of revived and reconstructed centuries-old processional songs, chants, prayers for Holy Week, old sacred songs and an unusual piece dedicated to the Virgin Mary from the ancient Latin mass – with vocals that plunge deep in expressions of joy, devotion, pain and love. Tempvs Fvgit is supported by Voilah! and the French Embassy.

Audiences are in for a rare treat with Sidi Goma's performance of *The Wandering Fakirs: The African Sufis of Gujarat* on 24 April at the Esplanade Recital Studio. The descendents of the African Sufis of Gujarat will share with you the exuberance of East-African sacred song and dance rituals including rousing chants, ecstatic drums that "speak" the words of *zikrs* (prayers), painted masks, colourful headdresses, infectious Afro-polyrhythms, conch-shell trumpeting and gravity-defying high kicks.

Huun-Huur-Tu, which has collaborated with artists from Ry Cooder to Frank Zappa, will transport audiences to a world of rushing waters, whistling winds, galloping horses and a moving communion between nature and song through their performance of *Call of the Herdsman – Throat Singers of Tuva* on 25 April at the Esplanade Recital Studio. A feat that takes years to master, *khoomei* or Tuvan throat-singing is best described as one man singing a three-or-four-part harmony, by himself! The deep, sonorous, windswept tones, performed in ensemble with traditional instruments such as the horse head fiddle, have captured the hearts of audiences worldwide.

Free Programmes

A Tapestry of Sacred Music kicks off with the opening act, *Gosa* (a traditional Korean ritual to bring good luck) by Noreum Machi (South Korea) at the Esplanade Outdoor Theatre at 7.15pm on 23 April. The group will also be presenting two performances of *Samulnori* (which literally means "to play four things") each evening on 23 and 24 April, which include Korean folk fusion of vigorous farmers' music and shamanistic wandering entertainers' music and dance. Coming together in cosmic harmony, each of the four percussive instruments represents a natural element – the *ching* (a large gong) as lightning, the *k'kwaenggwari* (a small brass gong) as wind, the *jang-go* (an hourglass-shaped drum) as rain, and the *buk* (a barrel drum) as clouds. In addition, the *Sacred Rhythms* presentations at the Outdoor Theatre will also feature two

performances of *Sacred Sounds of Japan* by Fuku No Ne Ensemble (Japan) on 25 April. Playing on the *shakuhachi* (vertical bamboo flute), *shamisen* (pluck string instrument), *yokobue* (horizontal bamboo flute), *koto* (zither) and drums, the Japanese group of musicians will be performing sacred music ranging from religious *koten* pieces (previously played at shrines and courts) to festive folk songs for a good harvest.

Also held at the Esplanade Outdoor Theatre, meditative chants will be featured during the *Call of the Dawn* presentations at 6.30am and the *Sunset Sojourn* at 6.30pm on 24 and 25 April. Special rituals, especially chanting, are still practised by many religious and spiritual groups during sunrise and sunset every day. Performed by various community groups in Singapore, the *Call of the Dawn* and *Sunset Sojourn* sessions will help rejuvenate the souls in the morning and help everyone unwind after a hectic day. After the *Call of the Dawn* presentations, members of the public are invited to attend the yoga session conducted by World Champion (2008-9) Master Yograttan Dev Kapil and the qigong session led by Evelyn Lee from Fitness Network on 24 and 25 April respectively.

At the Esplanade Concourse, the *Stirrings* presentations will feature quieter forms of sacred music with lyrics that inspire the soul. Choose from the deeply poetic *Qasidah* singing by the Maadihul Mustafa Ensemble, tranquil *Liturgical Music of the Tudors* by Ab Oriente and meditative *Khirtan* chanting accompanied by traditional instruments performed by the Sikh Gudwara.

Visual Arts and Workshops

Adding to the richness of the sights and sounds of the performances presented during the festival are the visual arts displays throughout the centre. Themed *Otherworldly*, the artworks venture into the world of the mind and engage viewers in the realm of the intellect, imagination and paranormal. At Jendela (*visual arts space*), Tan Chwee Seng (Singapore) presents *Waste Land* from 16 April to 9 May, a poetic solo exhibition which explores the spiritual journey that reflects one's inner reality of the world and the contemplative dialogue between the human condition and its living environment. Indonesian architect Eko Prawoto creates places of contemplation and self-reflection using bamboo, a simple yet resilient material, in both his work *Tapestry* at the Concourse and Theatre Street Cones from 10 April to 2 May as well as *The Temple* at the Esplanade Waterfront from 17 April to 2 May. Inside *The Temple*, there will also be performances featuring the Indian and Chinese flutes as well as the *oud* (pear-shaped string instrument) at 7pm and 8.15pm daily. From 9 April to 2 May,

Zai Tang (UK/Singapore) transforms the Esplanade Tunnel into a sonic space in his multi-media work titled *Sacred Soundscapes* through sounds that are collected from his journeying through Southeast Asia.

During the festival, there will also be daily sewing workshops conducted by Tay Bee Aye (Singapore) from 5pm at the Esplanade Upper Concourse. Members of the public are invited to spend some quiet moments doing simple stitching in this *mandala*-inspired sewing project for the community. The *mandala* (a sacred diagram in Buddhist and Hindu cosmology) is a work of ritual art whose construction is rooted in positivity. The artist will then assemble and sew all the pieces together to create a quilt.

Community Engagement Programme

Helping to bring the joy of the arts to the community, a series of pre-festival architectural workshops will be organised as part of Esplanade's community engagement programme for *A Tapestry of Sacred Music* 2010. Esplanade's community engagement programme, which leverages on the centre's accessible and wide-ranging annual calendar of presentations to bring the arts to community groups and beneficiaries of Voluntary Welfare Organisations (VWOs), aims to serve the needs of diverse groups in Singapore through specially-developed and sustained arts programmes.

Esplanade will invite 30 beneficiaries from the Pertapis Children's Home and Ang Mo Kio Family Service Centre to participate in the pre-festival architectural workshops on 14 and 15 April 2010, where Indonesian architect Eko Prawoto will introduce the concept and philosophy behind his work as well as teach them some basic building methods that are indigenous to the tropics. The children and youths will also be able to design parts of the visual arts display, *The Temple*, using simple methods that will be demonstrated by the artist and his team. In addition, 15 *Esplanade Youths*, members of the centre's youth engagement programme for tertiary students, will also have an opportunity to participate in a similar workshop on 16 April 2010.

Tickets for *The Wandering Fakirs: The African Sufis of Gujarat*, *Invocation of Love* and *Call of the Herdsman – Throat Singers of Tuva* are available at Esplanade's Box Office (Tel: +65 6828 8377), SISTIC Hotline (Tel: +65 6348 5555) and authorised agents as well as at Esplanade's website at www.esplanade.com. More information on the festival may also be found at the Esplanade website. (Please refer to the Annex for full festival line-up and details).

About Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay

Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay is one of the world's busiest arts centres, officially opened on 12 October 2002. This architectural icon with its distinctive twin shells is sited within Singapore's civic district, just by Marina Bay at the mouth of the Singapore River.

Esplanade aims to be a performing arts centre for everyone, and its programmes cater to its diverse audiences. Its programme line-up spans all genres to encompass music, dance, theatre and visual arts, with a special focus on Asian culture.

Esplanade houses world-class performance spaces, supported by a comprehensive range of professional support facilities and services. Its two main venues are the 1,600-seat Concert Hall, with acoustics by the late Russell Johnson of ARTEC Consultants, and a theatre with a capacity of 2,000 adapted from the traditional European opera houses in horseshoe form.

In the past year, Esplanade welcomed over seven million visitors and hosted over 2,400 performances.

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ANNEX

Esplanade Presents
A TAPESTRY OF SACRED MUSIC 2010
23 – 25 April 2010

*An adventure through continents and cultures,
A journey through histories and hearts,
In love with life,
In quest of peace.*

Come.

Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay presents its second edition of *A Tapestry of Sacred Music* from 23 – 25 April 2010, inviting audiences to experience the sanctity and joy of life as they encounter sacred music from all over the world. The three-day festival features ticketed and free performances of different forms of sacred music in a neutral environment at Esplanade, introducing new sounds and experiences to audiences.

TICKETED PROGRAMMES

The Wandering Fakirs: The African Sufis of Gujarat
by Sidi Goma (*Gujarat*)

“...ecstatic power... building slowly and steadily to a fever pitch.” – *The New York Times*

Around 800 years ago, shiploads of East Africans arrived in India as slaves, servants, bodyguards and free merchants.

In the region of Gujarat, their descendents, known as the Sidis and now numbering around 19,000, have kept to their traditions, honouring the African Sufi saint Bava Gor in the ways of their ancestors – through song, dance and exuberant expressions of joy.

Typically, a Sidi performance begins sedately then quickly escalates in a whirlwind of music and action once described by *Rhythm* magazine is “spectacular, mystical and – most importantly – fun”.

There will be rousing chants, ecstatic drums that “speak” the words of *zikrs* (prayers), painted masks, colourful headdresses, infectious Afro-polyrhythms, conch-shell trumpeting and gravity-defying high kicks.

Come experience with a unique people their rapture of life.

24 Apr 2010 (Sat)
Esplanade Recital Studio
10pm (90mins, including intermission)
\$35
Limited concessions for senior citizens, students and NSF: \$28

Invocation of Love
by Temps Fvgit (*France*)

“*L'intense émotion*” – *Journal de la Corse*

Named after its winter mists, the honey-and-wine-growing region of the Nebbiu in the enigmatic Mediterranean island of Corsica is one place where polyphonic singing still thrives and the ancient sacred Latin repertoire still lives.

Both were almost extinct until the 70s which saw a surge in nationalism, a revival of Corsican polyphony and a reconstruction of the old repertoire by ethno-musicologists. Today, Corsican polyphony is practiced by singing Brotherhoods and modern vocal groups alike.

For the first time in Singapore, hear Corsican ensemble Tempvs Fvgit sing centuries-old processional songs, prayers for Holy Week, chants, laments, traditional songs, old sacred songs from the Nebbiu, original compositions and an unusual piece dedicated to the Virgin Mary from the ancient Latin mass, with vocals that plunge deep in expression of joy, devotion, pain and love.

25 Apr 2010 (Sun)

Esplanade Concert Hall

7.30pm (90mins, no intermission)

\$35

Limited concessions for senior citizens, NSF: \$28 and students: \$19

Call of the Herdsman – Throat Singers of Tuva

by Huun-Huur-Tu (*Tuva*)

“The Tuvans will ride into your brain and leave hoofprints up and down your spine.” – *The San Francisco Bay Guardian*

For centuries, the low, droning call of the Tuvan herdsman has resounded in the vast, cold grasslands of Tuva between Siberia and Mongolia, the land of herding, wrestling, shamanism, wildly romantic folklore... and *khoomei* or Tuvan throat singing.

Perhaps best described as one man singing three-or four-part harmony... by himself, Tuvan throat singing is a feat that takes years to master. Lush with overtones, it honours earth, animal, water and sky and mimics the sounds of the land, rich with all its deep, sonorous, windswept tones.

Today, Tuvan throat singing is still practiced as part of the traditional Tuvan way of life. But now performed in ensemble with traditional instruments such as the horse head fiddle, it has captured the hearts of audiences worldwide.

Among its biggest stars are four-piece Huun-Huur-Tu who has collaborated with artists from Ry Cooder to Frank Zappa.

Let them transport you to a world of rushing waters, whistling winds, galloping horses, wild birdsong... and a moving communion between nature and song.

25 Apr 2010 (Sun)

Esplanade Recital Studio

5pm (90mins, no intermission)

\$35

Limited concessions for senior citizens, NSF: \$28 and students: \$19

FREE PROGRAMMES

Stirrings at Esplanade Concourse

Qasidah

by Maadihul Mustafa Ensemble (*Singapore*)

Expressive and affecting poems of pre-Islamic Arabic origin, depicting topics of romance, the pain of parting, scenes from the desert, Bedouin life, philosophical and social ideals, and/or religious praise.

23 Apr 2010 (Fri):

6.30pm – 7pm
8.15pm – 8.45pm

24 Apr 2010 (Sat):
4pm – 4.30pm
5pm – 5.30pm

Liturgical Songs of the Tudors
by Ab Oriente (*Singapore*)

Divine yet somewhat plaintive Tudor church music, sung in a *cappella* polyphony, written largely by Catholic composers for a conquering Protestant state church during the tumultuous English Reformation in the thriving Elizabethan era of 16th century England.

24 Apr 2010 (Sat):
7.15pm – 7.45pm
8.15pm – 8.45pm

25 Apr 2010 (Sun):
4pm – 4.30pm
5pm – 5.30pm

Kirtan
by Sikh Gudwara (*Singapore*)

Rhythmic and meditative call-and-response chanting that goes back 500 years in India and, accompanied by traditional instruments, brings to the singer and listener awareness and peace of mind.

25 Apr 2010 (Sun)
7.15pm – 7.45pm
8.15pm – 8.45pm

Sacred Rhythms at Esplanade Outdoor Theatre

Samulnori
by Noreum Machi (*South Korea*)

Literally “to play four things”, *samulnori* is a Korean folk fusion of vigorous farmers’ music and shamanistic wandering entertainers’ music and dance. It involves the playing of four percussive instruments – the *ching* (a large gong representing lightning), *k’kwaenggwari* (a small brass gong representing wind), *jang-go* (an hourglass-shaped drum representing rain) and *buk* (a barrel drum representing clouds) – which together represent cosmic harmony.

23 Apr 2010 (Fri):
7.15pm (Opening)
7.30pm – 8.15pm
8.45pm – 9.30pm

24 Apr 2010 (Sat):
8.45pm – 9.30pm
10pm – 10.45pm

Sacred Sounds of Japan
by Fuku No Ne Ensemble (*Japan*)

Shinto, the indigenous religion of the Japanese which focuses on the veneration of deities personifying natural elements such as the sea and earth, and Buddhism which only arrived in Japan in the 6th century have given rise to some of the most exciting music in Japan’s history. Experience Japanese sacred music ranging from religious *koten* pieces previously performed

at shrines and courts to festive folksongs for a good harvest and more performed on the *shakuhachi*, *shamisen*, *yokobue*, *koto* and drums.

25 Apr 2010 (Sun)

7.30pm – 8.15pm

8.45pm – 9.30pm

Call of the Dawn / Sunset Sojourn at Esplanade Outdoor Theatre

Wake up to the beauty of the day with invigorating early morning Sunrise Sojourn music sessions. Then return in the evenings to wind down with meditative Call of the Dusk sessions at sunset.

24 – 25 Apr 2010 (Sat – Sun)

6.30am & 6.30pm

VISUAL ARTS

Otherworldly

Quite often, while art is rooted in the things of this world, it also transports us to the world of the mind, the realm of the intellect and imagination, that of desire and the unexplainable, where past and future reside. Encountering the artworks in *otherworldly*, you'll find intimations of devotion to that which is of a higher order, you'll venture into the realm of the paranormal, and you'll discover belief and hope that the nebulous intangible is something worth pursuing.

Wasteland

by Tan Chwee Seng (*Singapore*)

This poetic solo exhibition explores the spiritual journey that reflects one's inner reality and the dialogue between the human condition and its living environment.

16 Apr – 9 May 2010 (Fri – Sun)

Jendela (*Visual Arts Space*)

Tapestry

by Eko Prawoto (*Indonesia*)

Bamboo, the personification of the life of simplicity, hangs loosely as semi-transparent screens. Woven together, hard bamboo becomes even more resilient.

10 Apr – 2 May 2010 (Sat – Sun)

Concourse and Theatre Street Cones

The Temple

by Eko Prawoto (*Indonesia*)

Architect Eko Prawoto has created a space that flows from various openings into a central space where one is contained yet revealed, a void that connects the earth and sky.

17 Apr – 2 May 2010 (Sat – Sun)

Esplanade Waterfront

Sacred Soundscapes

by Zai Tang (*UK/ Singapore*)

Recorded sounds from sacred places in Singapore are transplanted in the urban space of the Tunnel to explore how people respond to sacred sounds in their local environment.

Find out more about this work-in-progress and the artist's processes at Zai Tang's blogsite – <http://sacredsoundscapes.wordpress.com/>.

9 Apr – 2 May 2010 (Fri – Sun)
Tunnel

WORKSHOPS

Community Sewing Project

by Tay Bee Aye (*Singapore*)

The mandala is a sacred diagram in Buddhist and Hindu cosmology. It represents the universe, a gathering centre to which energies are drawn. Usually created as coloured sand art, painting or embroidery, the mandala is a work of ritual art whose construction is believed to be beneficial to maker and viewer. In this mandala-inspired sewing project, passers-by are invited to participate in several quiet moments of simple stitching. Their pieces will be sewn by the artist into a quilt.

23 – 25 Apr (Fri – Sun)
Upper Concourse
From 5pm
Free

A Tapestry of Sacred Music
23-25 April 2010

Venue	Fri 23 Apr	Sat 24 Apr	Sun 25 Apr
Concert Hall			Invocation of Love <i>TEMPVS FVGIT</i> (Corsica) 7.30pm 90mins no intermission
Recital Studio		The Wandering Fakirs - The African Sufis of Gujarat <i>Sidi Goma</i> (Gujarat) 10.00pm 90mins with intermission	Call of the Herdsman - Throat Singers of Tuva <i>Huun Huur Tuu (Tuva)</i> 5.00pm 90mins no intermission
Outdoor Theatre	Samulnori <i>Noreum Machi (South Korea)</i> 7.15pm Opening 7.30-8.15pm 8.45-9.30pm	Samulnori <i>Noreum Machi (South Korea)</i> 7.30-8.30pm Qasidah <i>Maadihul Mustafa Ensemble</i> 9.00-9.30pm Samulnori <i>Noreum Machi (South Korea)</i> 10.00-10.45pm	Sacred Sounds of Japan <i>Fukuno Ne Ensemble (Japan)</i> 7.30-8.15pm 8.45-9.30pm
Sunrise and Sunset at the Outdoor Theatre		<i>Call of the Dawn / Sunset Sojourn</i> 6.30-7.00am 6.30-7.00pm Yoga 7.30-9.00am	<i>Call of the Dawn / Sunset Sojourn</i> 6.30-7.00am 6.30-7.00pm Qigong 7.30-9.00am
Concourse <i>Stirrings</i>	Qasidah <i>Maadihul Mustafa Ensemble</i> 6.30-7.00pm 8.15-8.45pm	Qasidah <i>Maadihul Mustafa Ensemble</i> 4.00-4.30pm 5.00-5.30pm Early Vocal Music <i>Ab Oriente</i> 7.15-7.45pm 8.15-8.45pm	Early Vocal Music <i>Ab Oriente</i> 4.00-4.30pm 5.00-5.30pm Khirtan Sikh Gudwara 7.15-7.45pm 8.15-8.45pm
Upper Concourse	Community Project Mandala-Inspired Embroidery Workshop 5-9pm		
Esplanade Lawn	<i>The Temple</i> - An installation by Eko Prawoto (Indonesia)		

Note:
 Programmes & schedule subject to change. Please refer to Esplanade's website for latest update.