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**Braddell Heights Symphony Orchestra and The Joy Chorale
Put Up First Community Operatic Concert,
The Pirates of Pulau Penzance**

Concert is local interpretation of Gilbert and Sullivan's Popular Opera

Singapore, 10 June 2015 – Singapore's longest serving community orchestra, the Braddell Heights Symphony Orchestra (BHSO), and the newly established The Joy Chorale continue to challenge the conventions of community orchestra by staging Gilbert & Sullivan's comic operetta, "The Pirates of Penzance".

With a Singaporean twist.

Titled, "The Pirates of Pulau Penzance," the plot revolves around the young and naïve Frederic, who having recently turned 21, is being released from his apprenticeship to a band of tender-hearted pirates. However, his "sense of duty" and conscience compels him to despise the vile profession of piracy and exterminate his former allies. He meets Mabel, the daughter of Major-General Stanley, and the two young people fall instantly in love. Ironically, Frederic soon learns that he was born in leap year, and thus had not yet completed his indenture.

Giving the show a Singaporean twist, the BHSO production is set in the Straits Settlements in the 1880s, with characters and themes that a modern day Singaporean audience can relate to.

Commenting on the choice of Gilbert & Sullivan for the orchestra's first foray into opera, Adrian Tan, Music Director of BHSO, said, "Opera is first and foremost a theatrical form, driven by characters, situations and plots so it is imperative to understand what is being said and sung on stage. Perhaps the biggest impediment to appreciating opera is that it is sung in the original foreign language. Reading subtitles while trying to appreciate the staging and listening to the music can be very distracting and does not do justice to the entire experience. While English translations do exist, they often compromise the music because the songs were composed with the original language in mind, and also the text loses some of the cultural subtext which cannot be so easily translated. So a good way to bring opera to the Singapore community is to begin with one written in English in which the audience can



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relate to. As far as wit, sophistication and sheer entertainment value, few can rival the works of Gilbert & Sullivan.”

The Pirates of Pulau Penzance features an international cast. The orchestra held casting calls in May 2015 to the public attracting applicants ranging from professional opera performers to complete novices. The final selection includes a cast with backgrounds almost as colourful and diverse as the characters in the opera.

Playing the role of Major General Stanley is New Zealand-born Brent Allcock, 49, who not only runs a successful financial advisory business but also boast of a career as an opera singer. He was previously cast the roles of Ping in Turandot, Count in Marriage of Figaro and Schaunard in La Bohème, with New Zealand Opera, Rockdale Opera in Australia and Singapore Lyric Opera respectively.

Joining him in the cast are Leslie Tay (Frederic), Edwin Orlando Cruz (Pirate King), Tim Garner (Police Sergeant) as well as newcomers Nicholas Toh (Samuel), a student at the NUS High School and Irene Lee (Ruth), a former teacher who decided to pursue her passion in music. Her first debut was with the BHSO and The Joy Chorale when they first presented Beethoven’s 9th Symphony in January 2015. She was then, a chorister who had no prior training or experience in singing classical music.

Making her operatic debut in the role of Mabel is the young soprano Tiara Valencia Sadikin, 19, who won the American Protégé Vocal Competition 2013 which took place at the prestigious Carnegie Hall.

Discussing the rationale behind the ambitious project, Mr Tan revealed, “It was only a matter of time before BHSO introduces the Singapore community to the incredibly rich operatic repertoire. In other countries, classics like Mozart’s “The Magic Flute” are regularly presented by amateur or community opera companies because they are well-loved by audiences. Although we do not have the tradition of going to the opera in Singapore, there is no reason why we cannot delve into and begin learning to enjoy these wonderful works.”

“The Pirates of Pulau Penzance”, the opera, will feature the 80-member BHSO and 40-strong chorus from The Joy Chorale. It will be held on Sunday, 28 June 2015, 5pm at the School of the Arts Concert Hall. Tickets are on sale at Sistic and are priced from S\$15.00. Information about The Pirates of Pulau Penzance is available on our website at www.bhso.org and our Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/ILoveBHSO>.



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About Braddell Heights Symphony Orchestra

The Braddell Heights Symphony Orchestra (BHSO) is Singapore's most established community orchestra. Established in 1986, the orchestra has been home for many Singaporean musicians as well as those from around the world to pursue their passion and love for music. Comprising both professional and amateur musicians, the orchestra has a current strength of about 80 members.

BHSO presents at least four public concerts in each of its concert season. Staying true to its vision of bringing classical music to the community, the programme for each concert is deliberately planned to ensure the orchestra brings music from the community, for the community, be it whether it is performing the works of Singapore composers or featuring homegrown talent. In recent years, it has featured the works of composers such as Bernard Tan and Jeremy Monteiro, as well as Singapore violinist, Loh Jun Hong.

The orchestra's repertoire has also grown in diversity over the years, covering Baroque to even contemporary works by John Adams, Aaron Copland and Armenian composer and pianist, Alexander Arutiunian. Most recently, the orchestra ended its Season 2014 with a presentation of Beethoven's 9th Symphony at the Esplanade Concert Hall, playing to a full-house.

Community engagement is core to the orchestra – presenting concerts such as “Sing Messiah” in 2013 where the audience was encouraged to bring along their scores and sing along to excerpts of G.F. Handel's “Messiah” performed by the orchestra soloists and chorus. In 2014, the orchestra brought this vision to greater heights when it started The Joy Chorale, an initiative that brings classical music to the community and more importantly, also brings the community to classical music.

More information about BHSO can be found at:

Website: www.bhso.org

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ILoveBHSO>



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About The Joy Chorale

The Joy Chorale is an initiative born out of the Braddell Heights Symphony Orchestra's belief in bringing classical music to the community and bringing the community to classical music. Formed in September 2014, what makes The Joy Chorale unique is its ability to bring both trained and amateur singers who have little or no experience and training in classical music or singing.

With the main objectives of spreading the joy and passion of music through singing, and more importantly, to bring classical music to the Singapore community, The Joy Chorale made its first debut with the Braddell Heights Symphony Orchestra when they jointly presented "JOY! – Beethoven's 9th Symphony" in January 2015.

The choir has about 150 singers and continues to welcome members of the community who are able to hold a tune, appreciate classical music and simply, enjoy singing.

Media Contact

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