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MYOF for the musically-gifted youths

Suraya Al-Attas

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - The musically-gifted youths of the nation now have a supportive environment in which to develop their interest in orchestral music with the launch of the Malaysian Youth Orchestra Foundation.

Launched today by its chairman, Mirzan Mahathir, MYOF was initiated by some of the country's prominent business figures in the belief that the spirit of collaboration and pursuit of excellence through music play a significant role in reinforcing national and international co-operation and unity.

"The formation of the foundation is an initiative in response to the social ills facing our youth today. We believe that music is a medium which exerts a powerful influence on human behaviour throughout the ages.

"A young person involved in an orchestra can learn a lot. Participation in an orchestra and music classes can foster a sense of purpose, self-respect, teamwork and focuses the mind and body to produce a work of art and beauty," said Mirzan at the event which also marked the launch of the MYOF logo.

He added: "By raising the awareness of orchestral music and nurturing the musical talent of our youth, we can channel the boundless energy of our young people in a positive, productive and creative way."

MYOF, he said, had lined up a series of programmes in which the musically-inclined young people can look forward to.

Its first project is the Asian Youth Orchestra Rehearsal Camp 1997, which will be held in Kuala Lumpur between June 8 and 29, followed by a gala performance on June 29.

Fully-financed by MYOF, the event, which is collectively known as the AYO Malaysia Programme, will be graced by the MYOF patron Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali.

After the three-week rehearsal in Kuala Lumpur, the orchestra will perform in Hong Kong from July 1 to 4 to celebrate the reunification of Hong Kong and China before embarking on a tour of China, Korea and Japan.

Of the 102 members of the AYO chosen this year, five are Malaysians namely Lee Yin Fah, who plays the trombone, Lin Yin Fung (cello), Ong Lin Kern (viola) and Chan Lai Kheng and Lo Mei Yoke (who both play the violin). They were selected through highly-rigorous auditions held throughout the region.

Among the objectives of MYOF, said Mirzan, were to educate and assist young Malaysians hone their physical, mental and spiritual capacities through activities associated with music so they might become better members of society; to promote excellence in music; and to be directly involved in activities that further accelerates the public interest and appreciation of music.

"But more importantly, we want to recognise young talents. We would like to help them become members of an orchestra. We also hope to provide them with financial assistance, musical instruments, books and scholarship in their pursuit of musical development.

"Although the foundation has just started, we are seriously looking at giving out scholarships. For a person to develop as a good member of an orchestra, there is a need for additional training and this costs money," he said.

MYOF is also looking towards setting up a full orchestra in the future.

"To achieve these goals, we need funding. We hope corporate bodies and

individuals who share our vision in promoting orchestral music and the performing arts would offer us their support."

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