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Arts alive in Langkawi

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LANGKAWI will reverberate to the rhythms of world beat and colours like never before in the Langkawi International Festival of Arts (Lifa), the cultural festival standard of the new millennium.

After the welcoming dinner on Day 1 on Oct 26, it will be an effervescent celebration of music, dance, art and poetry from some of the best acts in the country and also world-class virtuosos from Asia, Europe and Oceania.

Already, expectations are high with the much-vaunted Spanish flamenco tandem of barefoot dancer La Chunga and her guitarist Paco Prada coming.

There will be many ole, for sure, at Tanjung Rhu, where she will be strutting her sultry stuff, on Nov 1-3.

You could almost hear the castenets and cante (song) of the Andalucian dance already.

That's not all.

Mask dance from Bali; Vietnam's renowned Thang Long Water Puppet Theatre; the Cebu Youth Symphony Orchestra Woodwind Quintet of the Philippines; jazz duo of Thijs van Leer and Mike del Ferro from Holland; Ingrid Sal piano recital from the Philippines; Andrea Griminelli on flute with Luigi Vinelli on guitar from Italy.

Our own Aida Redza and Dancers and traditional musician Ku Ahmad Ku Mustafa; Lewis Pragasam and Friends, not to mention the KL Symphony Orchestra (string quartet).

The events will be held all over Langkawi. For instance, the Water Puppet performance will be at Sheraton Perdana; Grimilli and Vinelli at Barn Thai; the Balinese dance at Langkawi Fair, the Lada open theatre, Pelang and Lanaii; and Van leer and del Ferro at Andaman.

Also the National Poet Convention by Gapena will be held there at the same time, on Oct 20-Nov 4, at the Langkawi Convention Centre, where the creme de la creme will wax lyrical about anything under the moon.

The finale will be the official opening of the Ibrahim Hussein Museum and Cultural Foundation by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who eight years ago launched the museum project.

And at night, it's carnival time on the beach at Tanjung Rhu with activities helmed by the real absolute pros from Club Mediterranee.

Lifa is organised by the IHMCF (Ibrahim Hussein Museum and Cultural Foundation) in collaboration with the Rome-based Caschi Bianchi Europa Foundation (White Helmets Europe Foundation).

It is supported by the Kedah State Government, the Langkawi Development Authority (Lada) and Malaysia Airlines.

The museum-in-the-rainforest envisaged by artist Datuk Ibrahim Hussein on one of the most salubrious pieces of littoral land in northwestern Langkawi holds a major collection of the artist's works and will also showcase donations from some of his luminary artist friends all over the world.

As the de facto director/impresario of this festival, Ib, as he is better known, has invited outstanding young local artists, to expose them to works and artists of international repute.

The list includes multimedia artist Hasnul Jamal Saidon; installation artist Susyilawati Sulaiman (Major Awardee, Young Contemporary Artists Competition); Kungyu Liew (triple Minor Awardee, YCA); installation artist Chuah Chong Yong (Minor Awardee, YCA); printmaker par excellence Juhari

Said: Matahatis Ahmad Fuad Osman, one of the recent winners in the Philip Morris Asean Art Awards - Malaysia; wood sculptor Faizal Ramli and painter Wong Chee Meng.