

Penyampai : DATIN SERI DR. SITI HASMAH BINTI HAJI MOHD. ALI
Tajuk : UPACARA TOPPING OUT DEWAN FILHARMONIC PETRONAS DAN PELANCARAN
PENUBUHAN THE MALAYSIAN PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA
Lokasi : KUALA LUMPUR CITY CENTRE, JALAN AMPANG, KUALA LUMPUR
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1. Terlebih dahulu saya mengucapkan berbanyak terima kasih kepada PETRONAS atas jemputan kepada saya untuk menyempurnakan upacara topping out Dewan Filharmonik PETRONAS dan melancarkan penubuhan The Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra.

2. Upacara ini menandakan satu lagi detik penting dalam penghijrahan negara menuju pencapaian taraf negara maju berlandaskan Wawasan 2020. Saya berasa terharu dan gembira mendapat peluang melancarkan projek yang akan memperkukuhkan lagi pembangunan negara yang tercinta ini.

Saya ingin merakamkan penghargaan saya kerana dipelawa menjadi penaung kepada The Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra. Saya mengalu-alukan jemputan itu. Projek ini adalah satu-satunya projek yang lama dinanti oleh rakyat Malaysia.

3. Malaysians are fortunate that this country is located on the busy route which for centuries was travelled by peoples of many cultures in the pursuits of trade and political ambitions. As a result the country becomes the congregating point and the melting pot of several major cultures. One of the happy outcomes of these events in history, is the diversity of the musical traditions which we inherited and which has made this country rich in the rhythms, melodies and harmonies of music.

4. As a people Malaysians have always enjoyed music. The increasing prosperity, particularly in the past decade, has strengthened the desire among Malaysians to widen and deepen their musical experiences. They are out looking to savour the best in music. This is evident from the expanding sales of recorded music and sophisticated hi-fi equipment. In the last several years we see a new trend - the emergence of a growing body of Malaysian tourists whose main destinations are the concert halls of the developed countries.

5. By the middle of next year Malaysia will have its own state of the art concert hall, when the Dewan Filharmonik PETRONAS will be completed. Malaysians and visiting music enthusiasts will then be able to experience and enjoy live performances of some of the best in classical music in the best architectural and acoustic environment. We will also be having our own world class symphony orchestra in the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra which opens its season in September next year.

6. I feel encouraged to see such a growing interest in the arts and music among the younger generation of Malaysians. This augers well for the development of music in this country. In the past the progress in this aspect of the nation's development was constrained by the lack of proper facilities. The establishment of Dewan Filharmonik PETRONAS will to some extent help remedy the situation and provide the facility we have been waiting for.

7. It is my hope that besides meeting our own national needs, this magnificent hall will rank among the venues of choice for touring concert groups. This will not only help promote the country in the music circle, but it will also enable Malaysian music lovers to enjoy classical music performed by the renowned orchestras and soloists right here in this country.

8. The setting up of the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra will fulfil another long-felt need. It will serve to encourage talented students to decide to make their career in music. Furthermore the orchestra will play an important role in the development of music education. I am told that PETRONAS is looking into the viability of setting up a Music Academy linked to the orchestra.

9. As you may be aware music has been included among the optional subjects in the curriculum for the secondary schools. The success of this experiment depends on the availability of an adequate number of qualified music teachers. A Music Academy is an important component in ensuring the realisation of this

programme.

10. With the setting up of the concert hall and the orchestra, the foundation has been laid on which we can build a viable and sustainable development of music in this country. The initiative taken by PETRONAS will require the support of everyone of us if we are to achieve the cultural agenda set out in Vision 2020. I hope all interested parties will come forward to give their support to this new venture for the benefit of our people and nation.

11. With that note, I would like to extend my sincere best wishes for the success of the Dewan Filharmonik PETRONAS and the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra.