



Malay
Heritage
Centre
Presents

A Malay Heritage Centre commission
As part of Pesta Pecah Panggung – Transcending Boundaries

كوتا ايمقين وانيتا بارو

KOTA IMPIAN

Modern Women

STARRING
HUDA RAMDZAN

FEATURING
ORKED
MALAYA

WRITTEN BY
NUR
HIKMAH ALI

DIRECTED BY
HIDAYAT
NORDIN

IN A CITY OF DREAMS, FIVE
WOMEN DARED TO WRITE THEIR
OWN STORIES.

30 April, 1 & 2 May
Auditorium, Malay Heritage Centre

Event Language: Malay with English Surtitles



Malay Heritage Centre Unveils Revamped
Galleries with

PESTA PECAH PANGGUNG: TRANSCENDING BOUNDARIES

Date: 25 April to 3 May 2026

The Malay Heritage Centre (MHC) reopens in 2026 with Pesta Pecah Panggung: Transcending Boundaries, a blockbuster festival celebrating the completion of an extensive revamp featuring enhanced spaces, expanded capabilities, and exciting new possibilities. Over nine days, the festival will bring to life the rich tapestry of Malay heritage in Singapore and its deep connections across the region through performances, exhibitions, workshops, and community programmes. This landmark event invites everyone to explore Singapore's Malay heritage and its connections to the broader Malay world, fostering meaningful connections that celebrate and preserve our shared cultural legacy for generations to come.

About the Production

KOTA IMPIAN: MODERN WOMAN

Kota Impian: Modern Women, draws inspiration from MHC's new permanent gallery narrative, *Dari Rantau Ke Rumah* (From Region to Home). This commissioned production is based on the prominent women featured in Gallery 4 – City of Dreams: Making a Mark.

Discover the untold stories of Singapore's pioneering Malay women who shaped our nation's identity after World War II. This powerful music-theatre production celebrates trailblazers like Che Zahara Binte Noor Mohamed, Haliza Mohd Som, Siput Sarawak, Saloma, and Zahrah Za'ba – remarkable women who stepped forward to rebuild and revitalise Singapore whilst redefining what it meant to be a modern woman then.

Starring actress Huda Ramdzan and featuring all-female ensemble Orked Malaya, Nur Hikmah Ali's writing tells the tale of how these extraordinary figures overcame expectations and barriers to leave lasting legacies that continue to inspire today. Their contributions, often neglected in the footnotes of history or obscured by someone else's story, finally take centre stage in this moving tribute that honours their courage, creativity and determination.



FEZHAH MAZNAN

CREATIVE PRODUCER'S MESSAGE

It is difficult to do justice in the re-telling of the lives of Saloma, Siput Sarawak, Haliza Mohd Som, Che Zahara and Kak Wah. Malay women who were and are in the public eye often have to hide parts of themselves. As such, even with intensive research, we feel like there's more to them – their rage, their labour, their hopes. In creating *Kota Impian: Wanita Baru*, there have been many moments of disbelief as we reencountered their courage and audacity as well as the many injustices that they each had to face. These injustices are still happening today to Malay women in Singapore, and so it feels like the most opportune time to be sharing this work as part of the reopening of the Malay Heritage Centre. As we rediscover our heritage, we hope this work will encourage our community to consider what's important to us. We invite the audience to, like us in the team, find something to take away with them and help to continue to build, repair and make better this Kota Impian that these [wanita-wanita baru](#) have laid out for us.

**Lihatlah
Tempatku di sini
Bunga baktiku
Kekal abadi**

*See
My place is here
My flowers of service
Blooms forever*

Excerpt from Bunga Bakti

ABOUT FEZHAH MAZNAN

Fezhah Maznan is a creative producer and performance dramaturg with over two decades' experience producing theatre, music, and dance locally and internationally under Teater Ekamatra, Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay, Singapore International Festival of Arts, and independently. She co-founded The Public Space, creating long-term artist projects, and founded CurrentSEA, promoting connections among Southeast Asian artists.

Find out more about her [here](#).

THE DARING DIVAS

SALOMA

Known as Malaysia's first Biduanita Negara (National Songbird), Saloma rose from singing as a teenager in Singapore to become a legendary voice and screen presence across Malay entertainment. With a "lemak merdu" vocal style and charismatic film roles in classics like *Seniman Bujang Lapok*, she recorded hundreds of songs and became a fashion and cultural icon of her era. Her artistry and spirit helped define Malay popular culture from the 1950s through the early 1980s.



ZAHRAH ZA'BA

Zahrah Za'ba, also known as Kak Wah, was a trailblazer in Malay radio, ruling the airwaves of the 1950s and 60s. A multi-talented broadcaster, she read news, produced and starred in hit radio plays like *Esah dan Keluarga-nya* and *Keluarga Si-Chomel*, and became the first woman to head Radio Singapore's Malay broadcasting department. A mentor, innovator, and storyteller, Zahrah inspired colleagues and captivated audiences across Malaya and Singapore, leaving a lasting legacy in broadcasting and Malay culture.



HALIZA MOHD SOM

From a young age, Saleha Mohamed Shah, also known by her pen name Haliza Mohd Som, defied expectations, leading her school in protest when denied the chance to train as a teacher. As a journalist and editor, she founded Fesyen, the first magazine for Malay women in Southeast Asia, inspiring tens of thousands to read, think critically, and envision life beyond traditional roles. A trailblazer in media, politics, and advertising, Haliza championed women's empowerment throughout her life, leaving a legacy of courage and independence.



SIPUT SARAWAK

Born Ramlah binti Mohamad in Kuching, Sarawak, Siput Sarawak rose from bangsawan (traditional Malay opera) stages to become one of the most celebrated actresses of the Malay cinema Golden Age. She made her screen debut in the late 1940s and went on to star in dozens of films across Singapore and Malaya, including early classics such as Chinta and Nilam, helping shape the region's post-war film landscape. Her powerful presence, versatility and memorable performances made her an icon of Malay screen storytelling. Beyond her own screen achievements, she was also mother to famed entertainer Anita Sarawak.



CHE ZAHARA BINTE NOOR MOHAMED

Born into a family devoted to knowledge and service, Che Zahara was inspired by her father's pioneering work as a translator and advisor under British rule. A lifelong advocate for women's rights, she championed fairer divorce laws, raised the legal marriage age, and used creative methods, including public plays, to spark social change. Founder of Singapore's first Malay Women's Welfare Association, Zahara's home became a sanctuary for hundreds of vulnerable women and children. Affectionately known as "Kaum Ibu," her legacy shaped the nation's women's rights movement and continues to inspire generations today.



BUNGA BAKTI

Original song composed for *Kota Impian: Modern Women*

Selama ini ku tersisih
Riwayatku tak dipedulikan
kata-kataku tak berarti

Dimanakah
Tempatku di sini
Sejarah telah mengingkari
Bunga baktiku

Dengarlah
kulaungkan suaraku
Kau pasti tak dapat berpaling
Lagi

Kuukir
Tempatku di sini
Ku bukan lagi hidup
Di garisan tepi

Dengarlah
Kulaungkan suaraku
Harapan membara
Dalam diriku

Lihatlah
Tempatku di sini
Bunga baktiku
Kekal abadi

All this time I've been ignored
My story made worthless
My words rendered meaningless

Where
Is my place in all of this
History has ignored
the flowers of my service

Listen
As I raise my voice
You can look away
no longer

I etch
my place here
I no longer live
in the sidelines

Listen
As I raise my voice
You can look away
no longer

See
my place is here
my flowers of service
blooms forever

MEET THE CAST AND CREATIVES



HUDA RAMDZAN, PERFORMER & CO-COMPOSER FOR BUNGA BAKTI

Huda is a singer-songwriter, producer, and actor with over 19 years of experience in Singapore's local entertainment industry. Currently an artist under independent record label Mosta Records, she is known for her distinctive soulful and raspy voice, as well as her emotionally intimate approach to storytelling.

Drawing from personal experiences, quiet introspection, and a deep reverence for heritage, Huda's work blends nostalgia with contemporary expression. Whether performing, writing, or producing, she approaches her craft with emotional honesty, subtlety and a strong sense of identity, creating music that feels both timeless and deeply personal.

Find out more about her [here](#).

ORKED MALAYA

Orked Malaya is an all-female project band brought together by Rudi Salim. United by a shared passion for music, they perform classical Malay repertoire from the 1940s onwards, including songs by the late R. Azmi, P. Ramlee, and Saloma.

Find out more about them [here](#).

DAVELYN SINDHEE, MUSIC DIRECTOR & PIANIST

Originally from Kuching, Sarawak, Davelyn is classically trained in piano and violin. Beyond her role as a dedicated music educator, she has performed at notable events, including the World Youth Jazz Festival 2014.

Find out more about her [here](#).



DANIA MUNIRA, VIOLINIST

Dania is an accomplished violinist and dedicated music educator with over ten years' experience in education and performance. She holds a Diploma in Music and a Bachelor's in Music Education from Sultan Idris Education University. An active performer, she has represented Singapore in major international festivals and was also featured as a solo violinist in the Solo Keroncong Festival under Nobat Kota Singa, as well as in a tribute performance to Singapore's Senior Minister with Orkestra Melayu Singapura.

Find out more about her [here](#).



AISHAH HASSAN, DOUBLE BASSIST

Aishah pursued a Bachelor's degree in Music Education at Sultan Idris Education University (UPSI). She was an active member of the UPSI Symphony Orchestra and part of the Malaysian Philharmonic Youth Orchestra from 2016 to 2021. She also took part in an exchange programme at the University of Kansas, where she performed with the Symphony Orchestra and Strings Ensemble.

Find out more about her [here](#).



SYARFA SHAHIRAN, PERCUSSIONIST

Syarfa Shahiran is a versatile percussionist and session musician performing across Western and cross-cultural musical genres, including pop, funk, reggae, and traditional Malay music, alongside Indian, Samba, African, and Chinese music. She regularly collaborates with Bloco Singapura, Nadi Singapura, Djembe Singapore, and Malaysia's samba band White Percussion Unit, contributing to theatre productions, live stage performances, and television.

Find out more about her [here](#).



KAN ZI JUN, GUITARIST

As a Yamaha Revstar Artist, Zee blends technical precision with a versatile, cross-genre approach to the guitar. Her musicality is rooted in a classical background as a diploma-level pianist and erhu player, which now fuels her work as the guitarist and songwriter for Taledrops. Following tours in Taiwan and Japan, and a win as Asia Pacific Regional Champions in Hong Kong, Zee continues to bring a disciplined yet melodic edge to every stage and project she touches.

Find out more about her [here](#).



ATLAS GOH, DRUMMER

Atlas is a seasoned drummer with over a decade of experience. Known for her energy in jazz, metal, fusion, and math-rock, she thrives on collaborating with fellow musicians and, off-stage, enjoys mentoring students, sharing her passion and expertise in drumming.



NUR HIKMAH, WRITER & TRANSLATOR

Nur Hikmah Md Ali is a writer and poet. She has published poetry, commentaries and essays on numerous platforms curated by Berita Mediacorp and Malay Heritage Foundation. In 2021, she was nominated as a Sahabat Sastera (Friend of Malay Literature) by the Malay Language Council, Singapore. In 2024, she was a mentee under Singapore Book Council's mentoring programme under Poetry (Malay language). She is currently a member of Meja Conteng, a collective of young Malay writers in Singapore. She writes in both Malay and English about the female experience that sits at the intersection of religion, race and politics.

Find out more about her work [here](#).



HIDAYAT NORDIN, DIRECTOR

Hidayat Nordin is a producer, writer, director, and arts activist. He has founded performing arts groups, directed and performed in numerous productions, and taught arts and media across primary to tertiary schools. An award-winning playwright and director, Hidayat has created over 30 original writing and musical works, staged plays in Singapore and Malaysia, and published the poetry collection *Optimis*. In 2025, he was appointed Duta Bahasa by the Malay Language Council, Singapore.

Find out more about him [here](#).



NUR SALI ZAMEERA, ASSISTANT TO DIRECTOR

Nur Sali Zameera is a part-time Diploma in Digital Entertainment and Events student at Republic Polytechnic. Her passion for theatre started with Pusaka Seni at Nanyang Polytechnic. She honed her skills with ARAS Theatre, a youth Malay theatre collective, and has since worked on *Cerpen Ke Panggung* (2024) and *Salina* (2025).

Find out more about her [here](#).



NUR ARIANTY DJONAEDE, CHOREOGRAPHER

Nur Arianty Djonaede (Ari) is a multidisciplinary arts practitioner working across movement and production. She began her training in Malay dance before transitioning into street dance. An Associate Artist at P7:ISMA and Associate Producer at Bahri & Co., Ari creates and curates works for diverse audiences, exploring the internal landscapes and quiet power of the female brown body through the vocabularies and nuances of street and Malay movement.

Find out more about her [here](#).



SAFUAN JOHARI, DRAMATURG & MUSIC CONSULTANT

Safuan Johari is an artist who works primarily as a composer, music producer and sound designer. Music-making is usually a world building exercise and the resulting microcosms often meander through traditional, experimental and popular topographies of Nusantara (Maritime Southeast Asia) culture. Started out as a prominent figure in Singapore's underground music scene, he has expanded his practice into composing for theatre, dance, films and multimedia installations.

Find out more about him [here](#).



DANIAL DK KHALIQ, MUSIC ARRANGER

Danial dk Khaliq is a vocalist and technical keyboardist with classical training and extensive experience in bands, orchestras, and ensembles. An original Orkestra Sri Temasek member, he is also an accordionist and Music Director in Malay music, both locally and overseas, bringing theoretical expertise and showmanship to every performance.

Find out more about him [here](#).

RUDI SALIM, BAND MANAGER

Rudi Bin Salim is a musician, percussionist, and singer specialising in Malay traditional music. Founder of Nobat Kota Singa and Orked Malaya, he is also a senior drummer for Nadi Singapura and a member of Singapore Rojak. His work spans Malay classical to pop yeh yeh, performing locally and internationally, including at the Esplanade and major festivals.

Find out more about him [here](#).



PETRINA DAWN TAN, SET DESIGNER



Petrina Dawn Tan holds a Master's in Collaborative Theatre Production and Design from Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London. Specialising in Scenography (Space and Lighting), she has designed for circuses, community music festivals, and participatory installations. Passionate about integrating light and space, she advocates a seamless synthesis of visual, experiential, and spatial elements. Her work has won Best Set at the 2020 Straits Times Life Theatre Awards and been showcased internationally, including Brisbane Festival and Oz Asia.

Find out more about her [here](#).

PETRINE TAN, ASSISTANT TO SET DESIGNER

Petrine Tan's past experience spans both performance and backstage roles, including Ensemble Performer (Choir) in *Tiger Babies* (CHIJ SJC 74th Anniversary), as well as production and technical work with BUDS Theatre Company, Toy Factory Productions, LOVE 97.2FM, and the 8th ASEAN Para Games in Singapore. Petrine has also contributed as a facilitator and video crew member at Gateway Arts.



PRODUCTION CREDITS

Stage Manager:

Siti Raudha Tehan

Assistant Stage Manager:

Syuhadah Yahaya

Hair & Make Up:

Jane Shah

Aliff Khan

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The antique pieces featured in the play are courtesy of avid vintage collectors from our community:

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*Includes images from Fesyen magazine September 1965,
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