



PROGRAMME BOOK

THE SECRET GARDENS OF THE SEA

**SERUAN
SETU**





THE SECRET GARDENS OF THE SEA

Rhythm in Bronze (RiB) is thrilled to present a unique musical journey into the seldom-explored and little-known realm of Malaysia's endangered seagrass meadows.

Clumping together in shallow coastal waters, seagrass form meadows that represent a fascinating ecosystem teeming with turtles, dugongs, seahorses, and a myriad other species – endangered and not. So rich in biodiversity, these microcosms are also vital for sustaining the livelihoods and well-being of coastal communities. Yet, they are among marine life's unsung heroes and face rapid destruction. Every hour, the equivalent of two football fields of seagrass is lost around the world due to natural causes as well as human activity.

Our aim, through this concert, is to bring greater awareness and appreciation of the importance of seagrass. Via an intersection of arts and the environment, we present original gamelan pieces composed by Malaysian artistes who were invited to immerse themselves in seagrass habitats. Each piece is a provocative metaphor of the emotions and sentiments awoken by our undulating seagrass meadows and the communities that rely on them.

The *Secret Gardens of the Sea* continues in the tradition that began with our Gamelan Theatre concert, *Arus Gangsa* – that of channelling the power of music towards supporting environmental preservation. As human activity increasingly destroys our environment and natural habitats, we seek to inspire change. With *Arus Gangsa*, we brought to surface the broad theme of water. Now, we take the dialogue deeper into a specific marine ecosystem.

The concert is integral to our Artistic Director and Music Director Dr. Jillian Ooi's Pew Marine Fellowship project, titled "What Lies Beneath: Revealing the Secret Lives of Seagrass Roots and the Hidden Charisma of Seagrass Habitats." Her project, which began in 2022, has four main objectives. The first three explore the ecology of seagrass roots and the development of transplant anchoring devices; the fourth leverages culture and the arts to bring the seagrass narrative to a wider audience.

As the Pew Marine Fellowship finances scientific research, we turned to Cendana's Dana Kandungan Digital (DKD) Industri Muzik to fund Jillian's fourth objective. In addition to our live performances, we are creating a digital documentary of our journey. We have also organised a post-performance conference on August 29, providing a platform for diverse stakeholders to share key learnings and foster actionable insights for the protection of seagrass ecosystems.

Thank you for joining us on this extraordinary journey as we dive into the mystique of seagrass meadows and the communities they sustain. We hope you enjoy their story as narrated through the transcendent language of music.

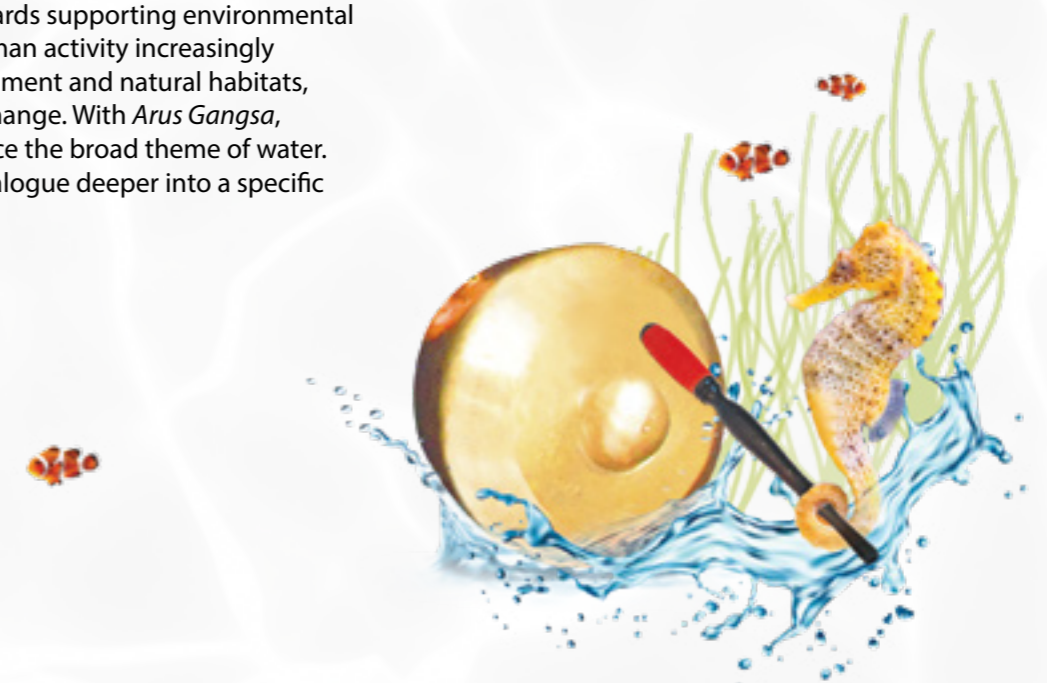




Image by Benjamin L. Jones

RHYTHM IN BRONZE: MAKING WAVES IN THE COMMUNITY

Since 1997, RiB has been devoted to the preservation of Malaysia's music heritage, ensuring future generations will appreciate, cherish and become part of this cultural legacy. At the core of RiB's work is contemporary Malay gamelan, a blend of traditional and modern tones that encapsulates the spirit of a rapidly developing nation. Through innovative compositions and collaboration with accomplished local and international musicians, RiB has been able to showcase this eclectic art form in academic and world-music circles.

As the group evolved, it has become increasingly drawn towards an even broader mission. From the focal point of music preservation, it is now also using music to drive environmental conservation.

This new journey began in 2014 with *Arus Gangsa*, a concert that sparked awareness about how vital water is to all forms of life. With *The Secret Gardens of the Sea*, audiences are invited to ride the waves of music to the wondrous underwater world.

The spirit of collaboration has been a driving force behind this ambitious project. RiB extends its deepest gratitude to those who have journeyed with them, shared their vision, and contributed to the creation of this unique musical experience.





WHY SEAGRASS MATTERS

Seagrass is something of an unsung hero in our marine world. It's not as glamorous as colourful coral or as iconic as massive dugongs, but it plays a crucial role in the health of our oceans! Let's dive a little deeper (pun intended) into why these underwater gardens are so important:

- **Promoting biodiversity:** Think of seagrass beds as bustling underwater cities. They provide shelter as well as breeding and feeding grounds for a variety of marine life, from tiny seahorses to graceful dugongs. Without these meadows, many marine species would not survive.
- **Natural protectors:** Seagrass meadows act like nature's shock absorbers. During storms, they help dampen the force of the waves, protect our coasts and prevent erosion. They're like the bodyguards of the coastline!
- **Climate change warriors:** Believe it or not, seagrass is a heavyweight when it comes to carbon capture and storage. These meadows can store up to twice as much carbon per unit area as forests on land. So not only do they keep our oceans alive, they also help to combat climate change!
- **Economic powerhouses:** Many local communities rely on the health of seagrass meadows for their livelihoods, whether through fishing, tourism or other sea-related activities. Protecting seagrass means securing a stable income and food source for countless people around the world.
- **Nature's purifiers:** Seagrass beds help improve water quality. They act like filters, retaining sediment and absorbing many pollutants from the water. If you're swimming on a beach in crystal clear water, it's quite possible that the seagrass has played its part.

With *Seruan Setu*, we seek to shine a light on the wonders of seagrass. It's not just about the music or the performance, but about understanding and appreciating the delicate balance of nature and the role we all play in it. We hope you'll join us on this melodious journey of discovery and appreciation.

Meet Setu (*Enhalus acoroides*), a titan of the tropical seagrass world. Boasting the title of the largest tropical seagrass species, Setu isn't just about size; it's a testament to nature's wonders beneath the waves. With long, ribbon-like leaves that stretched up to 1.5m, anchored by robust root systems, this seagrass stands as a vital part of marine ecosystems, providing shelter and nourishment for countless marine species. But more than its role in marine life, the majestic presence of Setu in our waters is a reminder of the intricate beauty and essential functions that seagrass meadows bring to our oceans.



Image by Affendi Yang Amri

KELAB ALAMI AND PASAR PENDEKAR LAUT - GUIDING PROGRESS THROUGH NATURE

Collaborating Partners

In the heart of Mukim Tanjung Kupang, there is a group that sets sail in a different way, pursuing a course of development that is in harmony with the rhythms of nature, not against it. This group of visionaries calls itself Kelab Alami, a local initiative founded in 2008 as an environmental education club. In 2014, like a river adapting to the landscape, its goal shifted to focus on and help manage increasing development around them.

Imagine a vibrant community that weaves together the threads of marine habitat and cultural heritage exploration, environmental education, sustainable ecotourism and community entrepreneurship. This is precisely the mission of Kelab Alami. They also work with over 40 fishermen under the banner of Pasar Pendekar Laut (Sea Warriors Market). This unique programme is making waves as the fishermen are paid twice as much as other operators to ensure they bring in quality catches that don't harm the ecosystem.

More than a marketplace, Pasar Pendekar Laut's Market is an educational centre and a champion of fair trade. Here, customers learn about the seasonality of seafood and the importance of paying a fair price for quality seafood. Fishermen registered with MyKomuniti Perikanan (MyKP) Pendekar Laut aren't only part of the market, but also part of a larger movement by releasing endangered species caught accidentally and contributing to ongoing research.

Kelab Alami isn't just about the sea, though; they have widened their net further. They offer ecotourism initiatives and employ local fishermen as boat captains, and young people as nature guides. Visitors can explore seagrass beds, the fascinating island of Pulau Merambong and coastal mangrove forests while being educated about the environment and local heritage.

And if the adventures work up an appetite, guests can sample local dishes at Warung Citarasa Tg Kupang, an enterprise that not only tickles the taste buds but also preserves cooking traditions and provides employment opportunities for local women.

Education continues to be the focus of Kelab Alami, with programmes aimed at training the new generation of scientists and habitat experts. Their Citizen Science initiative at Shattuck-St. Mary's-Forest City International School encourages the school community to participate in natural heritage documentation, including an impactful mangrove rescue and replanting project. In the midst of this busy development, Kelab Alami is a beacon leading the community towards a sustainable future, one initiative at a time. If you'd like to join them on their journey, visit kelabalami.weebly.com or email serina_mola@yahoo.com / kelab.alami@gmail.com.





KEY MESSAGES: PRODUCER

Welcome to *Seruan Setu - The Secret Gardens of the Sea*, a musical performance that invites you to embark on a soul-stirring journey of awareness and connection. This production, brought to you by the contemporary gamelan group Rhythm in Bronze, blends the magic of the performing arts with a heartfelt commitment to preserving the endangered seagrass ecosystem in Malaysia.

We first began exploring environmental themes with *Arus Gangsa*. Through *Seruan Setu - The Secret Gardens of the Sea*, we hope to continue to effect meaningful change through the power of music. At the heart of this project is the curation of a collection of original gamelan compositions that not only captivates your senses but also ignites your curiosity about seagrass ecosystems and how they are vital to the communities that rely on them.

We are incredibly grateful for the collaborative spirit that fuels this production. We have had the privilege to work alongside not only renowned performing arts practitioners, but also scientists and communities directly impacted by seagrass ecosystems. Their insights and dedication have woven a tapestry of authenticity and purpose into every aspect of this performance.

To Jill, who has that rare ability to bridge the rational and intuitively creative worlds of science and performing arts, we extend our deepest gratitude. Zahim, your visionary conversations have shaped this production, bringing us closer to our shared goal of raising awareness and inspiring change.

Sharmini Ratnasingam

To every other person involved in the production, your unwavering commitment and deep involvement have breathed life into this project, infusing it with passion and meaning. The musicians, in particular, have put their hearts and souls into creating a truly memorable and magical experience. Their love for the art form resonates through each note played in their performances.

While we aim to captivate and inspire, we also believe in the power of action. We invite you, our cherished audience, to let this performance fuel conversations. Together, let us explore how performing arts can be a platform to address important issues and drive positive change. We urge you to take these conversations beyond the performance and into your daily lives, cultivating a ripple effect of awareness and action.

In conclusion, *Seruan Setu - The Secret Gardens of the Sea* is a heartfelt invitation to embark on a journey of wonder, connection and purpose. Through the collection of emotive compositions, we seek to reveal the hidden beauty of seagrass and ignite a passion for their preservation. Join us on this path of hope and inspiration as, together, we become catalysts for a brighter future.



ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

The first time I worked with Rhythm in Bronze was in 2005 when Chee Sek Thim, Lim How Ngean and I were asked to jump in to take over rehearsals of *Monkey Business* because the late Krishen Jit, the actual director, had fallen seriously ill. It was Rhythm in Bronze's first foray into what has become its Gamelan Theatre series, where established theatre directors, choreographers, set, costume and lighting designers collaborate on contemporary gamelan performances integrated with theatre. While in one sense it was taking gamelan music back to its roots, with a gamelan troupe accompanying various forms of traditional Southeast Asian theatre and performance, Rhythm in Bronze's Gamelan Series has always been innovative, pushing boundaries and taking contemporary gamelan performance to new heights.

In the 18 years since *Monkey Business*, Sharmini and Jillian invited me on several occasions to direct one of their productions, but somehow our schedules never synced. That is until end 2022 when they approached me for *Seruan Setu* (The Call of the Setu). It was perfect timing as I was also looking for a post-Covid theatre project to work on. They explained how this would be the first time Jillian would be integrating her expertise as a marine biologist with her role as musical director of Rhythm in Bronze.

The objective is to create awareness about seagrass. With scant knowledge of seagrass, I was apprehensive. I had also never directed anything like this before – part documentary, part gamelan concert – I doubt many theatre directors have. However, I was intrigued by the prospect of working out of my comfort zone. I told myself to treat it like a science experiment to discover if the worlds of marine science and gamelan can be brought together to impart a very important message.

The project started in February 2023 when a group of composers, musicians, choreographers, photographers, videographers and myself went down to Tanjung Kupang, Johor for a four-day Immersive Lab. We experienced and learnt about the seagrass meadows and mangrove swamps, and were introduced to the communities whose livelihoods

depend on seagrass. Dr Serina, the founder of Kelab Alami, and her husband Lan, the founder of the Pendekar Laut Pasar Sungai Pendas, a cooperative of local Johor fisherman, hosted us. A smaller team went back in July to shoot more footage of the seagrass meadows and interviews with members of the local communities to use as part of the diverse tapestry which makes up the unique theatrical and musical performance which is *Seruan Setu*. Thank you to all the *pendekar laut* and local residents who came forward to support this project, and share their lives with us. Special thanks to Lan, the original *pendekar laut*, and Dr Serina for your dedication and passion for making a difference.

When we returned to KL after the first trip, we needed to form a coherent roadmap to guide us towards creating this unique piece of theatre. We brought in Mark Teh, whose talent in creating powerful stagings of documentary theatre, like the recent *A Notional History*, is undeniable. The series of mapping workshops he facilitated was invaluable – we can't thank him enough for this.

Seruan Setu has been a truly collaborative work involving music composers, documentary footage, animation, photography, choreography, lighting, sound, projection, set and costume design, and makeup. A big thank you to all the collaborators, Adilah, Faliq, Umar, Jyotsna, Sayyid, Khairi, Aida, Mac, Danny, Raja Malek, Affendi, the musicians, singers, dancers, animators, my assistant director, Reuben, Bebe and her stage management team. I am sorry I am unable to name everyone but thank you all the same for answering the call of the seagrass and for your contributions to this project. To the audience, thank you for your support; I hope all these elements have come together to give you an entertaining and informative experience.

Finally, my immense gratitude to Jillian and Sharmini for inviting me to direct *Seruan Setu*. It has been a truly enriching and meaningful experience. I did not expect to still have so much learn about the planet in my 60th year on it. Now I know how essential seagrass is to the survival of our oceans. I have discovered a new unsung hero. Thank you.

Dato' Zahim Albakri





MUSIC DIRECTOR

My first encounter with seagrass was 18 years ago in the Johor River. Our team from Universiti Malaya was searching for dugongs to confirm if they were still present in Johor. We did find them and were overjoyed to catch glimpses of this elusive animal. But I found myself drawn more to their habitat – the lush seagrass meadows that cloak our shores in shades of green.

Returning to those same meadows last year, we found them looking the worse for wear. Villagers say the dugongs that used to populate this estuary are now rarely seen. One headman asked for help to revive their ailing seagrass meadow so that he may relive his childhood memories of thriving fish populations in these areas. One villager asked, “Why do scientists only study something when it is gone?” I had no answer.

But what I do have are Rhythm in Bronze and gamelan. *Seruan Setu* was created to tell these seagrass stories on a stage instead of a lecture podium, so that we may reach more people better and faster.

We began this project with a four-day immersive experience in Mukim Tanjung Kupang, Johor, so that our creative and production team could experience seagrass for themselves. My sincere thanks to Dr Serina Rahman, Shalan Jum’at, Kelab Alami and the *abang nelayan* of Pasar Pendekar Laut, for hosting us so warmly and willingly. You have a special place in our hearts.

Sharmini, thank you for believing in this project right from the start. For all those times you pretended to confuse seagrass and seaweeds, I know it was just to see my face dissolve into despair. I am grateful for this partnership and will continue to talk to you about seagrass...at least until the sea cows come home!

My deepest thanks to our musicians and performers who surrendered themselves to the world of seagrass. *Seruan Setu* would not have been possible without their talent and dedication. To our composers—Adilah, Faliq, Gareth, Irena, Jyotsna, Sayyid and Umar—thank you for giving seagrass a voice. Colleen Wong, thank you for steadily driving and guiding the vocal sections.

Zahim, thank you for sharing this journey with us. It has been gratifying to hear you spouting seagrass facts off the top of your head, faster and better than scientists. Khairi, you tell the story of seagrass so well through your filmmaking. You really do get it! Mark, your gentle guidance in weaving our science stories together was a true blessing and I felt in safe hands. To Aida, our choreographer, thank you for your grace and kindness even on our clumsiest of days. Mac, Malek, Danny, and Terence – I am in complete awe of your artistry! I feel humbled to have you on our side.

The Pew Marine Fellowship I received in 2022 planted the first seeds of this concept. Thank you, Nate Fedrizzi, Michele Haynes, Leo Curran, Laura Meagher and the cohort of Pew Marine Fellows 2022 for being my sounding board.

My gratitude to Universiti Malaya for serving as our sanctuary during rehearsals. Professors Shaliza Ibrahim and Saiful Anuar, your support was invaluable! As was that of my colleagues at the Department of Geography.

I have been blessed with an incredibly supportive team of postgraduate students at the Team Sea Habitats Lab of Universiti Malaya. *Seruan Setu* draws inspiration from projects these young scientists contributed to, and I am immensely proud of them.

To my husband, Affendi, my fellow adventurer in the marine realm, thank you for being here for us. Somehow, you got dragged into this production but you came along with such graciousness and generosity for our cause. I will no longer hold it against you for being a coral reef scientist. To my family, I have so much gratitude for your love and patience.

Seruan Setu is an experiment in bridging the arts and sciences. We embark on this experiment with open hearts, not knowing if it will succeed. What I do know is that many in our cast and crew have become fervent champions of seagrass. May our music envelop you in the shimmering resonance of the gamelan that we love, awaken your senses, and instill a profound connection with the enchanting world of seagrass.

Jillian Ooi

VIDEO DIRECTOR

Jillian Ooi's knowledge and passion for seagrass has had a profound impact on me. Over the last few months, as we developed this project, she didn't just share facts and figures with the team; her heartfelt explanation had humility and urgency. There were moments when she had tears in her eyes, knowing the dangers that seagrass meadows face. Her dedication made me want to be part of the solution.

Diving into the depths of the ocean has been a significant part of my life. But it was through *Seruan Setu* that I truly began to understand the critical role of seagrass ecosystems. They are more than just underwater fields of plants; they are vital habitats that provide shelter, food and nurseries for countless marine species. Seagrasses also play a crucial role in mitigating climate change by capturing and storing carbon dioxide.

Khairi Anwar

Jillian's devotion to seagrass conservation awakened something in me. I realised that it was my responsibility to act and protect these precious habitats. So, with the guidance of Jillian and the support of the team, I decided to raise awareness about the importance of seagrass and the threats it faces, through this performance.

I am thankful for the eye-opening experiences that have reshaped my perspective on seagrass. My encounter with Jillian Ooi has fuelled my determination to continue this journey and advocate for the protection of these precious underwater meadows.





PROGRAMME NOTES

1. Mantera Nelayan

Music by : Jillian Ooi; Actual Mantra documented by Haron Daud

Singers : Muhammad Hidayat Rohaidid - (Apoi), Mohamad Faliq Che Adeni, Muhammad Haziq Bin Kamarul Ariffin, Nathanael Simon, Maryann Magdalena Linnis

Chorus : Rhythm in Bronze

Before the crack of dawn, the fishermen push their boats off the shore and begin their dance with the sea. They steer their boats towards their daily hope: rich fishing grounds. Sometimes their nets come up empty, but the spirit is not deterred.

To the rhythm of the waves and the whisper of the wind, they raise their voices. Their song is a traditional mantra, a humble plea for prosperity and protection from the mystical spirits of the sea. This song is inspired by the authentic mantras recorded by Haron Daud in his compilation *Ulit Mayang: Kumpulan Mantera Melayu* (1999). Some creative liberties have been taken with the words to ensure that no spirits were invoked. Experience this journey, this harmony of man, nature and tradition, in our performance.

Asal laut dari air
Asal air dari buih
Asal buih dari ombak
Asal ombak dari petir

Wainnaha wainnahu
Kupinta dari Langit
Kupinta dari Alun
Berkat laut

Wainnaha wainnahu
Ikan baru aku seru
Umpan buruk umpan baru
Jatuh lubuk makan selalu

Wahai Mambang berkuku (Karnitin)
Pahlawan Raja (Maharaja) di laut
Engkau jangan mengacauku
Dan juga apa perbuatanku (di laut)

The sea, from water it comes
Water, from a ripple it comes
A ripple, from the waves it comes
The waves, from the storm they come

Wainnaha Wainnahu
I ask of the skies
I ask of the waves
Blessings from the sea

Wainaha Wainnahu
I pray for good and plentiful bounty
Using bait, old and new
Each yield never returning empty

Oh spirit of the waters
Warrior of the sea
Do not hinder, do not impede
Me and my actions out at sea

Note: original words in parentheses





2. Ufuk

Music by: Teuku Umar Ilany Dancers: Aida Redza, Alla @ Azura Abal Abas, Rudy De Luna Jr, Damien Leow

An explorer on the brink of an extraordinary journey. As the sun casts its first light on the horizon, this person is drawn to the coast. A sense of anticipation is in the air as he sets off into the unknown, into the depths of the sea.

The underwater world reveals itself layer by layer. Each layer unravels a unique atmosphere, alive with a symphony of diverse marine plants and creatures, very different from those on land. Each moment deepens the connection to this aquatic universe and forever changes the explorer's perception of life.

The journey ends where it began - on the surface. But our explorer is no longer the same. With newfound awareness and knowledge, he looks at the horizon - once just a line where the sky meets the sea - as a symbol of the enlightenment attained. This song describes that transformative odyssey from curious immersion to triumphant ascent.

3. Alive

Music by: Adilah Junid Chorus: Haziq, Nathan, Maryann Video Animation: Blindspot Studio

Alive paints a picture of the underwater world, depicting scenes from daily life of the community of creatures in a seagrass meadow. You're taken on a journey and see the vibrant ecosystem through the eyes of the narrator, who illuminates the symbiotic ballet between the goby fish, shrimps, sea cucumbers and myriad other creatures among the seagrass. The symbiotic existence of the community of creatures, reflected in the intertwined melodies of the gamelan, reflects a world that is in harmony.

But problems lurk. The encroachment of human development threatens this underwater utopia. The serenity of the meadow is disrupted by panic and fear, and a once vibrant haven is now gasping for breath.

The narrative leaves you contemplating. Will this underwater community rise from the ruins, or will it fade into a forgotten memory, a lost dream of what once was? It's a poignant reminder of the fragility of these ecosystems and highlights the urgent need to protect them for future generations.

4. Hati Kamar

Music by : Mohamad Faliq Che Adeni
Dancers : Aida Redza, Alla @ Azura Abal Abas, Rudy De Luna Jr, Damien Leow

A captivating underwater world, a seagrass meadow pulsating with life and love. It's a realm where a princess winds gracefully in the waving seaweed, completely absorbed by the beauty of her home. Her heart yearns for her beloved, yearns for the shared whisper of love, for the tender dance of two souls joined together.

But this idyllic underwater romance is caught in a storm. Greed rears its head, causing havoc and destruction, putting selfish gain above the harmony of this delicate ecosystem.

Yet hope persists. The dream is to restore this underwater paradise to its former glory. It's not just about reclaiming its beauty, but also about passing on its history, its splendour to future generations so that they can understand and appreciate the importance of such places. This song captures the passion, the need and the enduring dream of a world beneath the waves.

5. Pulang

Music and Lyrics by: Irena Taib

Singer : Maryann Magdalena Linnis

Guest Performers : Muhammad Haziq Bin Kamarul Ariffin, Nathanael Simon

Video Animation : Blindspot Studio

Pulang is inspired by the serene vision of a sea turtle meandering through a lush underwater meadow. But behind this serene image lies a disturbing reality: the precious seagrass habitat that once teemed with life is now under threat. This truth triggers a storm of emotion - fear, grief - at the loss suffered by countless sea creatures.

It is a sensitive tribute to the displaced who long for their once thriving homeland. The melody paints an aural picture of the lost splendour of the meadow and captures the soothing sway of the seagrass in a 3/4 rhythm. Each instrument embodies a vital element of the ecosystem, reminding us of the delicate balance that has maintained this underwater oasis.

As the piece progresses, the interwoven rhythms intensify, expressing growing outrage at the lost homeland. *Pulang* is an emotional tapestry whose musical threads are coloured in shades of brown and red to reflect anger and pain, but are also interspersed with gentle stripes of light blue and green that provide moments of tender, poignant comfort.

Masih ingatkah waktu semuanya masih biru
Kini hilangnya di bawah langit abu

Sinar mentari menyembunyi
Tiada cahaya yang bisa menerangi

Hijau kian luntur
Hilang tempat berlindung

Aku ingin pulang, aku ingin pulang

Masih ingatkah waktu semuanya masih biru
Kini hilangnya di bawah langit abu

Do you remember when everything was still blue?
Now it's disappeared under the gray sky

The sun is hiding
No light can illuminate

The green is fading
We've lost our shelter

I want to go home, I want to go home

Do you remember when everything was still blue?
Now it's disappeared under the gray sky

Intermission





6. Corak Air

Music and Lyrics by: Teuku Umar Ilany

Chorus : Rhythm in Bronze

Singers: Maryann Magdalena Linnis, Muhammad Hidayat Rohaidid (Apoii)

A brave warrior bidding farewell to his beloved as he plunges into battle. The battle is brutal and leaves him badly wounded. With all the strength he has left, he tries to travel home. But his strength is failing and he is left on the edge of the water where his wife is waiting for him with hope.

In his last moments, he reaches out and touches the cool water. As he stirs the water, each ripple becomes a silent messenger - a bearer of his deepest feelings. The love for his wife, the sadness of their separation, the longing for their shared dreams and the pain of a future that will never come true. These ripples spreading on the surface are his final farewell - a poignant, unspoken farewell that carries his undying love for her.

Isteri:

*Pergilah, kasih
Kuserahkan sayang
Pahlawan melangkah
Doaku bersamamu*

Suami:

*Tenanglah, kasih
Cintaku abadi
Kenangkan diriku
Di dalam Corak air*

Wife:

*Make your way, my love
All of my heart I give you
A warrior, bound by duty
My prayers are forever with you*

Husband:

*Be strong, my dear
My love for you will forever be true
Remember and think of me
In the calm of the water ripples*

Gamelan interlude: husband goes off to war, ends up mortally wounded and tries to make his way back home. He collapses at the edge of the lake near his house.

Suami:

*Corak air
Sampaikanlah wasiatku
Corak air
Rentaslah zarah beribu
Sampaikanlah
Salam terakhir*

Husband:

*Ripple of water
Carry to her my final prayer
Ripple of water
Traverse the length of the lake,
Bid her
My last farewell*

7. Samudra Vasane

Music by : Jyotsna Prakash

Guest Performer: Jyotsna Prakash

Chorus : Maryann Magdalena Linnis, Muhammad Hidayat Bin Rohaidi (Apoii), Muhammad Haziq Bin Kamarul Ariffin, Nathanael Simon

A tribute to the divine Mother Earth, who nourishes all living things and wears the vast ocean as her robe symbolising her immense power. The music is a poignant cry for forgiveness, an admission of the damage we as humans have done to our shared environment.

It's not only about admitting our mistakes, but also about understanding our duty to heal and reconcile with the earth. The music is a reminder, a call to action, urging us to revive our original connection with the natural world. It celebrates our oneness with the environment, the beautiful, complex web of life that nurtures us all. Listen and rekindle your commitment to respect and protect our common home.

8. Return

Music by : Adilah Junid
Animation : Insight Visuals

A majestic journey of water, this piece begins with a dance of raindrops falling from brooding clouds. The tempo increases and turns into a passionate downpour that fills streams, winds around trees and tumbles over rocks.

Streams intertwine, one with another, creating a great symphony of nature. Eventually, this symphony slows down and the water comes to rest as it flows into open lakes and vast seas.

Imagine this breathtaking landscape - from the rain gently kissing the leaves of the forest, to babbling brooks, to the calm waters. The melody tells of the joyous journey of water, tumbling and calling out happily, "I am coming!" And then, in a gentle sigh of contentment, it whispers, "I am home." This is the rhythmic cycle of water, its ceaseless, exultant journey from sky to sea and back again.

9. Lengkung Hampa

Music and Lyrics by: Muhammad Sayyid Shafiee
Singer : Maryann Magdalena Linnis

Lengkung Hampa is a symphony of resilience, hope and healing - life as a musical theme that makes its way through interruptions only to emerge strengthened and echoing a deeper melody.

Inspired by the tenacity of endangered seagrasses, the main theme is a minimal melody that reflects the marine plant's subtle but vital role in our ecosystem. Then come the contrasting sections - bold, grand and resonant - a drastic depiction of destructive forces such as land reclamation, pollution and climate change.

Now imagine the piece as a patchwork of segments. They seem unconnected, providing the flexibility for a journey of performances not confined to a straight path. But a thin thread of minimalist melody weaves them all together, subtly connecting the structure.

Lengkung Hampa teases out our frustrations with elements that intrude on the main theme, while presenting an organised, moving performance. Symbolising the dent of a gamelan instrument that makes the sound resonate, "lengkung" carries the message to all of us - we can and must stand tall amidst life's interruptions.

Malam ku, dingin ku, sunyi ku, nikmat mu

*Gagah ku, taut ku, kasih ku, abai mu
Nafas ku, bakti ku, rasa ku, perlu mu
Ruang ku, masa ku, damai ku, hilang
Hasad mu, kerah mu, kaut mu, sakit ku*

*Tinggi mu, lapang mu, teguh mu,
Awan mu, bayu mu, syahdu mu,
Kasih ku, sayang ku, hilang*

*Sambut rayuan ku
Rayu memujuk hampa ku*

...

Night of mine, my coldness, my solitude, your pleasure

My bravery, my attachment, my love, your neglect
My breath, my devotion, my feelings, your need
My space, my time, my peace, lost
Your envy, your commands, your ownership, my pain

Your height, your expansiveness, your firmness,
Your clouds, your breeze, your melancholy,
My love, my affection, lost

Accept my plea
Plea to console my emptiness

...



Lengkung ini bersatu menyahut suara ku
Hapuskan lah rakus mu
Sembuhkan rasa mati mu

Dengar rayu pilu hampa ku
Kau ragut semua bakti ku

Dengan lengkung itu
Sembuhkan aku
Kau mati rasa
Kau rampas semua
Lengkung hampa kian rasa hilang

Sembuh lengkung hampa
Bukan sementara
Selimutkan rasa bahagia
Sembuh lengkung hampa

This curve unites to answer my voice
Erase your greed
Heal your dead emotions

Listen to my sorrowful plea, my emptiness
You snatch away all my devotion

With that curve
Heal me
You're numb
You seize everything
The empty curve feels more lost

Heal the empty curve
Not just temporarily
Embrace the feeling of happiness
Heal the empty curve

10. Saat Akhir

Music by : Gareth Farr

Dancers : Aida Redza, Alla @ Azura Abal Abas, Rudy De Luna Jr, Damien Leow

Saat Akhir (or 'Last Second') is an intricate tapestry woven from the colours of unique personalities. New Zealand-born composer Gareth Farr designed this masterpiece especially for Rhythm In Bronze to capture the individuality of each member and show how the interactions of all blend into a harmonious ensemble.

More than a demonstration of Rhythm In Bronze's skillful Balinese gamelan technique, *Saat Akhir* is a love letter, a commitment to the dynamic yet warm spirit of the group. Beyond that, it's a compelling call to action.

The performance embodies the urgency of preserving seagrass. It emphasises the ticking clock and makes it clear that now is the 'last minute' to act before our actions lead to irreversible damage. This composition urges us not to wait until the consequences become insurmountable. It's a tribute to unity and diversity and an urgent reminder of our responsibility to the earth.



BIOGRAPHIES: PERFORMERS



Adilah Junid

Composer, Gamelan Ensemble

Appreciative of the fortunate and wonderful experiences life has to offer.

“ I feel immensely grateful for this magical opportunity to do something I love (music with friends!) to support something else I love (sea life!).”



Colleen Wong

Gamelan Ensemble, Vocal Coach

She is Colleen Wong in her own special way

“ It is my fervent wish that the beautiful music produced by the gamelan will inspire the audience to make positive changes for shrimps, goby fish and sea cucumbers!!”

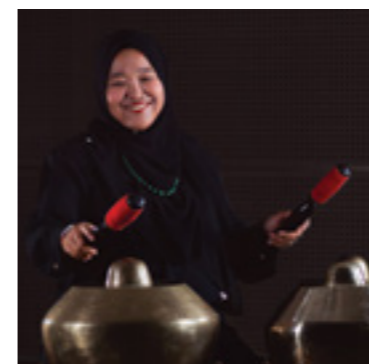


Adilla Fauzi

Gamelan Ensemble, Social Media Manager

A neurotic nerd who looks to science to answer questions about the universe, and who plays the gamelan to bring order to the chaos in her universe.

“ I’ve had the fortune of seeing the beauty of seagrass and its creatures underwater, but *Seruan Setu* taught me about the people. There was that impromptu, unforgettable moment when we sat in a circle with the artisanal fishermen of Pasar Pendekar Laut and listened to their stories. Generations have depended on the sea in the narrow strip of Selat Tebrau for their livelihood, and it is staggering to know that it is so easy to destroy so much.”



Etty Suhaya Yahaya

Gamelan Ensemble, Finance

A constant daydreamer always looking to find joy in the little things.

“ It feels amazing knowing that what brings me joy, i.e. playing the gamelan with a bunch of people I love, and through music in general, will help towards bringing about change and awareness for the environment - doing my bit, my way.”



Apple

Gamelan Ensemble

Music is my greatest inspiration, and every time I play or hear a new piece I am inspired even more. Music is great because it is one language that can be different every time you hear it. It inspires me to reach for my goals and not give up on my dreams.

“ Setiap kali bermain lagu yang dicipta oleh Adilah iaitu *Alive*, saya sering mendapat perasaan yang begitu menyentuh hati kerana lagu tersebut mempunyai pelbagai emosi berkenaan kehidupan di dalam kawasan rumput laut. Ini mengingatkan pada saya betapa pentingnya rumput laut untuk ekosistem kita, lebih-lebih lagi untuk mendapatkan sumber makanan kita.

Every time I play Adilah’s composition *Alive*, I feel deeply touched because the song evokes different emotions related to life in the seagrass ecosystem. It reminds me how important seagrass is to our ecosystem, especially as a source of food for us.”



Jillian Ooi Lean Sim

Music Director, Gamelan Ensemble

An introvert who needs space and time alone, preferably by the sea.

“ A special moment for me was during the immersive visit to Mukim Tanjung Kupang, when I watched my friends walk in the seagrass meadow, enchanted by their first encounter with this ecosystem. It reminded me that seagrasslands are magical places that should be protected so that people may enjoy them as wilderness areas to seek solace and healing.”



Ng Siu Yee

Gamelan Ensemble

Most of the time is chill, while being passionate about continuous learning and self-discovery.

“ Although I’m contributing only in a very small way to the project, I feel really happy and excited about all that has happened and hopefully will happen.”



Mohamad Faliq Che Adeni

Gamelan Ensemble, Composer

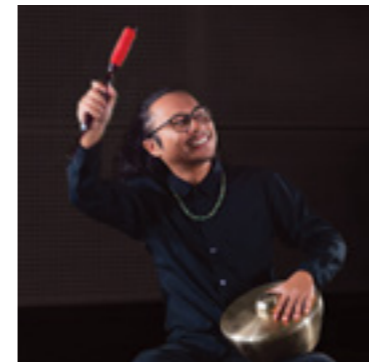
Big guy with a big voice who loves playing the gamelan and composing music for Malay Gamelan.

“ Dengan menghasilkan lagu untuk konsert ini, saya berharap dapat memberi kesedaran yang berterusan kepada generasi sekarang dan akan datang, bahawa pemeliharaan dan pemuliharaan rumput laut adalah penting dan wajar dipupuk dari umur kecil supaya mereka sentiasa menghargai kewujudannya serta menjadi ekosistem di laut kita.”

By creating songs for this concert, I hope to raise awareness among the young today and in future generations about the importance of preserving and conserving seagrass so that they will always value its existence and its role in our marine ecosystem.”

“ Kisah pernah saya lalui adalah sewaktu saya ke Tanjung Kupang, dimana seorang nelayan menceritakan bahawa beliau terpaksa berhempas pulas dalam mencari rezeki. Sebagaimana kita tahu, hadirnya rumput laut, memberi rezeki yang banyak kepada nelayan, kerana disitu banyak haiwan atau tumbuhan yang boleh dijual bagi menyara keluarga mereka. Tanpa rumput laut, ekosistem disitu pasti akan terjejas.”

During my visit to Tanjung Kupang, a fisherman shared that he had to work tirelessly to make a living. As we know, the presence of seagrass provides abundant livelihood for fishermen, as there are many marine creatures and plants that can be sold to support their families. Without seagrass, the ecosystem there would undoubtedly be affected.”



Syahmie Kamal

Gamelan Ensemble

Someone with a positive attitude and a sharp tongue but a gentle heart.

“ Seruan Setu is a project that conveys a positive message about the importance of preserving seagrass to prevent its extinction and to protect the marine life that depends on it, such as fish, crabs, sea cucumbers, seahorses and even dugongs. It also appears as a beautiful green carpet.”



Mohd Kamrulbahri Bin Hussin

Master Drummer

Distinguished figure in Malaysian traditional arts, born into a family deeply rooted in the culture and rituals of Kelantan and a senior lecturer (traditional music) at the Conservatory of Music, College of Creative Arts, UiTM Shah Alam.

“ I believe deeply that traditional music echoes our ancestral wisdom, a philosophy that aligns perfectly with the Seruan Setu production’s mission to amplify these cultural echoes. Through my contributions, I hope these echoes continue to resonate, connecting our shared past to the present and future.”



Guswin

Drummer

A 27-year-old Balinese talent born into a family steeped in the island’s rich culture and rituals, thriving in traditional arts and proudly graduating from the Indonesian Institute of the Arts in 2019.

“ Saya sangat senang bisa ikut berkontribusi dalam Seruan Setu, karena dengan begitu saya mendapatkan pengalaman baru. Semoga konser ini dapat menginspirasi masyarakat dan para pecinta seni.”

I am delighted to be able to contribute to Seruan Setu, as it provides me with a new experience. I hope this concert will inspire the community and art enthusiasts to preserve seagrass ecosystems.”



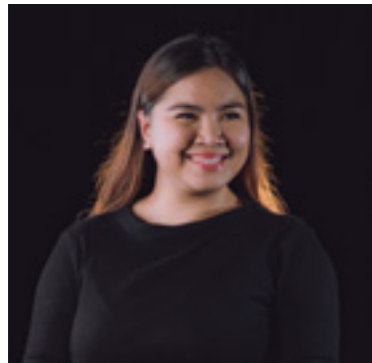
Sharmini Ratnasingam

Gamelan Ensemble

Not just an aviation veteran of three decades but also a musician, producer, life coach, author, and artist, whose storytelling and creativity, rooted in curiosity and vision, inspire and elevate others’ spirits.

“ Knowing that our contribution has the potential to inspire change and leave a lasting impact fills us with immense pride and humbles us. It affirms our belief in the transformative power of music to evoke emotions, raise awareness, and rally collective action towards the preservation of our precious marine ecosystems.”

GUEST PERFORMERS



Maryann Magdalena Linnis

Singer, Chorus

I am an achiever. Successful or not, I am proud of myself.

“ I feel grateful to be part of this amazing, hardworking, positive and motivated team. When the word Pulang is mentioned, and when I sing the Pulang song, it is a strong reminder to take care of our surroundings. It is possible to go backwards to improve but it is not easy to do.”



Nathanael Simon

Bassist, Chorus

A friendly person who loves to make new friend wherever he goes.

“ To be honest, I never imagined that I would be involved in a project like this. I feel so honoured and happy to be a part of this concert.”



Muhammad Hidayat Rohaidid (Apoii)

Singer, Chorus

Hardworking, driven to be humble, loving, relaxed and cool.

“ Saya berasa sangat teruja kerana dapat berkongsi bagaimana pentingnya untuk kita memelihara rumput laut dan membantu komuniti setempat tetapi, dalam versi nyanyian ensemble bersama gamelan.”

I feel extremely excited to be able to share the importance of preserving seagrass and supporting the local community, as part of the ensemble singing with the gamelan.”



Affendi Yang Amri

Scientist

Likes being underwater more than on land, discovering the wonders of our oceans, especially when it's quiet without humans babbling.

“ I'm happy, proud, humbled and teary-eyed to witness how *Seruan Setu* has altered the cast members' attitudes regarding seagrass and the possibility for it to do the same for the audience.”



Haziq KA

Guitarist, Chorus

Music student who is open and eager to learn and play any kind of music.

“ Bersemangat untuk Konsert *Seruan Setu* kerana ini kali pertama saya bermain bersama muzik gamelan. Bila bermain muzik bersama, tersedar dalam diri betapa penting untuk kita memelihara dan membantu komuniti setempat.”

I'm very excited about the *Seruan Setu* Concert as it is my first time playing alongside gamelan music. Playing music together, I realise the importance of preserving and supporting the local community.”



Aida Redza

Choreographer, Dancer

Alla @ Azura Abal Abas

Damien Leow

Rudy De Luna Jr

Dancer

Jyotsna Nithyanandan Prakash

Composer, Guest Performer



CREATIVE TEAM



Dato' Zahim Albakri

Artistic Director

An extremely fortunate person because in my life I have collaborated with and learnt from the most talented of Malaysians on some extraordinary creative projects. *Seruan Setu* is no exception.

“ There have been so many special moments since we began working on *Seruan Setu*. It is a truly captivating experience to be immersed in a seagrass meadow and to be able to observe the rich treasures that lay amongst it. It has also been humbling to learn about how vital seagrass is; not only to the communities whose livelihoods depend on it but also to the survival of the entire planet.”



Mark Teh

Content Mapper

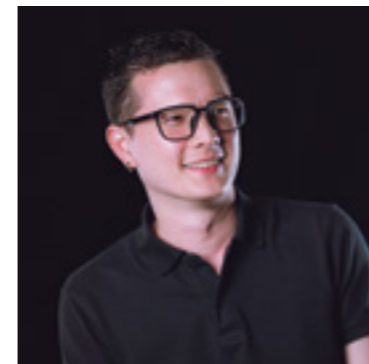
A performance maker, researcher and curator who is particularly interested in the entanglements of history, memory, and the political in our contemporary context.

“ Seeing Jillian Ooi share her expertise as a scientist passionately and generously with other members of the ensemble and production team in meetings, rehearsals and workshops has been moving and inspiring. Jill’s research resonates and reverberates across different generations, disciplines and people who have known her in different contexts.”



Jillian Ooi

Music Director, Gamelan Ensemble



Reuben Cheow

Assistant Artistic Director

Through the art of drama and the power of empathetic leadership, I weave stories that inspire hearts, transforming lives one stage at a time.

“ It is a humbling experience to work with experts from their respective fields, all coming together for a common goal, and I think that’s what makes this special. Sometimes, all we need is to focus on what unites us and from there we can see that no matter what we want to achieve, we don’t have to do it alone.”



Khairi Anwar

Video Director

Taller than 90% of the world’s population; and an avid scuba diver since the age of 14.

“ I’m passionate about exploring the wonders of the underwater world. Among the marine treasures I’ve encountered, seagrass has always caught my attention, but I didn’t fully grasp its significance until I joined the *Seruan Setu* project. The beauty and resilience of seagrass meadows inspire me to work so that future generations can marvel at these breathtaking habitats. Together, we can secure a healthier and more sustainable future for our planet.”



Aida Redza

Choreographer, Dancer

Stands as a determined pillar of female empowerment in Malaysia’s contemporary dance scene, boldly confronting societal stereotypes and boundaries through her intensely physical, emotionally charged and female-centred performances.

She embodies the fusion of tradition and innovation in her dance, nurturing heritage while pushing its boundaries. She believes that heritage is not stagnant but a living dialogue, and incorporates environmental elements into her work for preservation and awareness purposes. Through her choreographies and engagement, she aims to inspire respect for cultural heritage and nature, which she sees as important components of our social fabric.”





Raja Malek
Set and Costume Designer

A true multi-talent in the creative industry, excelling in set design, style curation and fashion with a boundlessly exuberant personality.

“ A firm believer in self-expression, Raja Malek sees heritage as a source of inspiration and a canvas for creativity. For him, heritage is not confined to the past, but a living, breathing narrative that informs his work and personal style. From his extensive collection of Comme des Garçons skirts to his elaborate set designs, he infuses his work with the rich texture of traditional and contemporary motifs. His eclectic approach demonstrates the belief that heritage is a comprehensive, multifaceted tapestry from which we can draw, continually shaping and reshaping our contemporary experiences.



Danny Hoo
Projection Designer

Manners make the man!

“ I never knew seagrass is so important in our marine ecosystem. This makes me keen to better understand the marine environment and spread this knowledge to existing communities as well as our future generation.”

Lim Ang Swee
Assistant Lighting Designer

Harris Cazaly
Assistant Sound Engineer

Shazzy Zakri
Wardrobe Assistant

Maroon Art
Set maker

Zuliana Zainal Abidin
Makeup Artist

Hasnita binti Othman
Makeup Assistant

Mohamad Izzat bin Ismail
Makeup Assistant



Mac Chan
Lighting Designer

Being there with shadow and light.

“ I truly hope this production serves as a great machine to deliver a powerful message and catalyses change for the better. In this machine, I am a bolt that maintains the momentum of movement, doing my little part to keep the machine running.”



Terence Chong
Sound Designer

“ I'd like the world to be more kind. Make it sound right, make the life tight.”



CREATIVE TEAM



Adilah Junid

Composer,
Gamelan
Ensemble



Mohamad Faliq Che Adeni

Composer,
Gamelan
Ensemble



Irena Taib

Composer

I am a guitarist and composer from Kuantan who loves the sea and the colour orange.

“ I feel grateful to be given the opportunity to write for gamelan as there are not many gamelan pieces in Malaysia that have been transcribed and documented. By being part of this process, I get to be part of a living musical legacy for the next generation to enjoy and learn from. The subject matter is also dear to me as I grew up by the ocean. I care deeply about our nature and seagrass and I understand how their survival affects many lives. I hope this project will inspire people to take care of our environment and our music as we all live in a continuum.”



Sayyid Shafiee

Composer

Crafting time with sound.

“ It was a truly remarkable moment when we observed diverse sea creatures collaborating to construct their habitat, with seagrass as their nurturing playground. Don't we wish our children could witness such wonders too?”

Teuku Umar Ilany

Composer

A composer and arranger who loves to release stray gamelan tracks when he is not food hunting.

“ Seperti lirik yang dinyanyikan oleh Sudirman, 'akulah penyambung warisan', saya melihat sumbangan saya secara muzikal ini diharapkan menggerakkan emosi pancaindera pendengar. Isu yang dibawa di dalam konsert ini adalah pembuka mata kepada alam yang sebenarnya tidak memerlukan kita, manusia; tetapi sebaliknya.”

To borrow Sudirman's lyrics, 'I am the inheritor of heritage.' I see my musical contribution in this concert as an attempt to stir the emotions of the listeners. The issues presented in this concert aim to open the eyes to a world that doesn't necessarily need us, humans, but rather the opposite.”



Gareth Farr

Composer

A New Zealand composer who works with Western ensembles from orchestras to string quartets, as well as Balinese, Javanese and Malaysian gamelan.

“ All new music has the power to inspire change and make a lasting impact. The way I do it is by exposing audiences to sounds they may never have heard before. In my experience, gamelan is a perfect way to do it. Combining gamelan with Western instruments is an even more unusual sound for audiences as the possibilities are endless.”

Jyotsna Nithyanandan Prakash

Composer, Guest Performer

Aspiring composer, mother, partner and teacher, in no particular order.

“ There was this picture of a little boy holding his oversized t-shirt to collect crabs (I think) for the family to eat. I felt so moved and compelled to do something in my own little way and to help shine a light on their plight.”



PRODUCTION TEAM



Sharmini Ratnasingam
Producer, Gamelan Ensemble, Finance, Overall Marketing



Adilla Fauzi
Social Media Management



Creature Films
Concert Videographer



Bebe Chan
Production, Stage Manager

Mere mortal who has a deep passion for the performing arts, and feels honoured to be given chance to be involved in such an inspiring project. Every small effort counts towards a big cause.

“ How resilient and accommodating the seagrass can be although it has been through so much destruction. It should be a natural heritage that the local communities pass down to their children so they are not always cooped up in the man-made concrete jungle.”

EuGrow Holdings Sdn Bhd
Publicity



Cindy Cheah **Ong Mei Len** **Reggie Teodoro**
Executive Director

EuGrow bridges aspirations for partners and clients through innovative, sustainable and streamlined solutions, fostering business growth.

“ Working with the local media allowed us to reach broader levels of society and elevate public awareness about endangered seagrass ecosystems in Malaysia and the importance of preserving the living tradition of the Malaysian gamelan. The interest shown by the media has made us realise that our collective efforts can make a difference. This has fuelled our enthusiasm, and filled us with a profound sense of purpose.”



Celine Teoh
Graphic Designer

A petite Wizard of Design with a passion for transforming ideas into visually captivating realities.

“ The special moment of discovering a vibrant seagrass meadow serves as a reminder of the interconnectedness of nature and humanity. Each one of us here plays a vital role in shaping this into a positive transformation, and I am humbled to be a part of it.”





Sidney Chan

Immersive Lab Videographer

Socially awkward, but being able to start a career in creative content and also raise a family means I'm doing something right.

“ Beyond burning anger from seeing the results of human destruction, it felt as if we were doing what we were supposed to be doing. It's always exciting to do something that can cause some positive uproar beyond our neighbourhood.

Being raised in the city with almost no childhood involving the beach and sea, seeing strange marine life without a tourist lens at my own pace brought back curious, child-like wonder I thought was long lost. All I could think about was to bring my son to experience what I never did, and the fact that we have such a rich diversity of flora, fauna, that noone seems to notice or appreciate.”



Jay Chiah

Immersive Lab Videographer

Aspiring filmmaker who enjoys telling stories and sharing messages through the cinematic craft.

“ It's great knowing that a small part from my end has an effect on bringing this story to a larger audience. It moves me and I hope that I can do more in the future.”



Michelle Yip

Photographer/ Exhibition Curator

A multi-hyphenate in the areas of arts education, production management, social enterprise and photography.

“ Through conversations with locals and advocates at Tanjung Kupang, I've learnt that our eventual well-being and survival is connected to what happens in an area far removed from our everyday reality. For instance, we can affect food security by taking practical actions towards our environment. If we never want to live through the food shortages that we did during Covid-19, we have to invest into caring now.”

STAGE CREW



Bebe Chan

Stage Manager



Armanzaki Amirozaki

Deputy Stage Manager

A very passionate geek who loves the arts in all forms.

“ It feels great to be part of a team or community that has such a wholesome purpose in mind and energy while performing for the awareness of others in the cause to help and heal our earth.”



Liew Chin Zhing

Assistant Stage Manager

Li Yi Xian

Stage Crew



Susie Kukathas

Front of House Manager
Animal, arts and nature lover.

Syafnaz Allwee

Dustin Perski

**Naveen A/L Harrie Raja
Rahman**

Tharwa Wajihah binti Zainal

Eke Sumber Oardin

Chan Hui Min

Lee Poh Chu

Farzana Yakta

Nematullah Muradi

Front of House Crew

Nina Ho

Mok Man Ying

Chew KL

Gautham Raj

Amalina Ibrahim

Nur Afiqah Dharwisyah Mohd Amin

Tengku Nur Alia Tengku Kamarol Aznam

Yong Sheau Ying

Asilah Awang

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Mohamed Fairuz bin Mohamed Ariff (Boy)

Lim Da Liang

klpac, Technical Crew



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Philip See (MAG)

Hilda Looi (Kakiseni)

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Juliet Jacobs (BFM)

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