

# FREE HAND 2022

2ND MALAYSIAN CONTEMPORARY COMPOSERS

PIANO FESTIVAL



PROGRAMME



# FREE HAND FESTIVAL 2022

2nd Malaysian Contemporary Composers Piano Festival

June 25th, 2022  
UCSI University, Institute of Music  
Kuala Lumpur

Presented by



Sponsored by



[www.freehandfestival.com](http://www.freehandfestival.com)

MESSAGE FROM  
**Adeline Wong**  
FESTIVAL DIRECTOR



Welcome to the 2nd Free Hand Festival organized by the Malaysian Composers Collective (MCC). This is MCC's first live performance since the covid pandemic and I am grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with UCSI University, Institute of Music in our efforts to enrich Malaysia's cultural landscape and showcase the ongoing contributions of our musicians. To celebrate the return to live concerts again, we are delighted to feature nine pianists from UCSI's faculty, alumni and students who will be performing nine Malaysian piano works.

I extend my gratitude to all the individuals whose immense help has made Free Hand Festival a success. A special thank you to Datin Christine Woo for her generosity and support.

May this evening be a selection of milestone moments since the past two years highlighting the achievements in the musical artistry. Let this special event celebrate the brilliance of today enriching us through music and looking forward to an even brighter future. May it pave the way to launch new initiatives that will help shape musical excellence and nurture the love of music.

Have a great evening!



MESSAGE FROM  
**Prof. Dr. P'ng Tean Hwa**  
DIRECTOR, UCSI UNIVERSITY, INSTITUTE OF MUSIC

In Free Hand Festival 2022, we are collaborating with the Malaysian Composers Collective (MCC) to provide a platform for composers to present new works. After the pandemic we are very happy to be working together again in this year's Free Hand Festival since our collaboration in 2019. Together with MCC we believe that as part of the music community, we have a duty to nurture and encourage the talent and creativity of Malaysian composers and performers.

The selection of the two winning composers for UCSI University International Piano Festival and Competition, not only provide them with a goal, but will also give the many young pianists at the competition exposure to be tested on their interpretation and exploration of these new works.

We hope to continue our collaboration with the Malaysian Composers Collective for the growth of such festivals and generate more interest in new music and performance to the general music community. For the composers, we hope that this will be a stepping-stone, and new doors will be opened for them. For the performers, we hope that they will see the excitement of working hand in hand with living composers in the creative process.

Be open, be curious, be excited about the unknown. Enjoy the concert!

JUDGE

## Foo Mei Yi



Mei Yi Foo was the featured pianist for the first Free Hand Festival 2019.

Winner of the 2013 BBC Music Magazine's Best Newcomer award, Foo is recognised internationally as an innovative pianist with a diverse and eclectic repertoire.

A prolific concerto soloist, she has appeared with the English Chamber Orchestra, Helsinki Philharmonic, Iceland Symphony, London Chamber Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra and Malaysian Philharmonic among others.

As an avid new music advocate, Foo works actively with living composers and performs at the world's most eminent festivals including the Lucerne Festival, Ultraschall Festival Berlin, Huddersfield Festival and the Punkt Festival in Norway.

A native of Malaysia, Foo resides in the UK and teaches at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. She was also awarded the medal of Setiawan Tuanku Muhriz for her contribution towards art and music in her home country.

JUDGE

## Kevin Field



Field was former Associate Conductor with the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra where he worked with world-class soloists in a variety of jazz, contemporary and mainstream inspired projects.

With the MPO, Kevin premiered over 180 international works in Malaysia by living composers, formed both the Malaysian Philharmonic Youth Orchestra, the MPO Forum for Malaysian Composers and GEMA – Generating Enrichment through Music.

He has also directed the BBC Symphony and Australia Chamber Orchestra, the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland and many others.

He studied percussion at the Birmingham School of Music and graduated from Royal Academy of Music, joining the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra (BSO) in the same year.

Presently, Field balances an international conducting career with his position at Bentley Music Academy where he is Director of Academic and Artistic Development.



JUDGE

## Adeline Wong

Malaysian composer Adeline Wong's music has often been described as bold, with textural energy and kaleidoscopic colours. Her recent music has aimed for distillation of musical material by concentrating on economy and exploring the material from every possible perspective.

Adeline is a Senior Lecturer in Composition and Theory at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music, National University of Singapore and the current President of the Malaysian Composers Collective.

Graduating from the Eastman School of Music and Royal College of Music London, her works have been performed by the Belgian National Orchestra, Orkest de ereprijs, the Netherlands, Bang on A Can USA, Singapore Symphony Orchestra and Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra amongst others.

Adeline was recently invited to be one of the speakers at the Francophonie Festival 2021, and Jury for AMAT International Competition for Women Composers 2021, Italy.

SATURDAY

# Concert Programme

June 25th, 2022 - 8.00pm

**AINOLNAIM AZIZOL**

*Berlabuh*

HO SU HAN

**NICOLE ONG**

*Piano Variations No.1*

CHEN JAY HOU

**RAYNER NAILI**

*Secluded Voice*

LEE YING JIE

**FAIRUZ ZAMANI**

*Two Miniatures*

YEE KE-JIN

**CHAN WEI TUCK**

*Contemplation*

MAXY CHAN MEI XUAN

## Intermission

**TAI YUN MING**

*Turning into Stars*

CHEE SU-YEN

**JOHAN OTHMAN**

*Four Bagatelles*

HO SU HAN

**JESSICA CHO**

*Arrhythmia*

TIAN ZI YAN

**ZHIYONG TAN**

*Sad Fact*

YSAN SUIT YIN & ESTHER GRACE FANGGARA

## Announcement of Winners



## BERLABUH (2022) Aino Inaim Azizol

Berlabuh (anchored) is a piano solo with tape composed specifically for the Free Hand 2022 festival. The piece is inspired by the recent major flood in Malaysia, utilising quasi-aleatoric composition techniques with fragments of sound gesture cells, which are then tied and anchored together by the pianist with tape.

The tape part serves as a sonic container and canvas for the piano part, consisting of rustling windy-trees sound (geophonic-psithurism) recorded around Clevedon in January 2022 and sound samples from my DIY aeolian harp.

Aino Inaim Azizol is a Malaysian pianist-composer and sound artist who explores eco-cultural sound-marks as a catalyst in amplifying Malay cultural identity. He has premiered his works in Germany, UK, Switzerland, Italy, Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and the US along with collaboration from various organisation such as The Japan Foundation Kuala Lumpur, Goethe Institut Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC), and R&D Studio including renowned ensembles such as Ensemble Mosaik, Asasello Quartet, and Kayafatilah Gamelan Ensemble, just to list a few. He is the recipient of the MARA Graduate Excellence Programme scholarship for his Ph.D. study in the UK for the year 2019-2024. He is the main founder of SPECTRA festival 2014-2018 and MEMlab.

COMPOSER

## Ho Su Han

Ho Su Han is currently a lecturer at the UCSI Institute of Music where she also serves as the coordinator of its chamber music ensemble. Ho graduated from the Cleveland Institute of Music, with a DMA in Collaborative Piano.

A native of Johor, she previously obtained her BMus in Piano Performance and Pedagogy from the Universiti Sains Malaysia, and continued her graduate studies at the University of Houston graduating with the degree of MM in Collaborative Piano.

She has participated in various music festivals, and her interest in new music has led her into numerous performances with AURA Contemporary Ensemble in Houston, CIM New Music Ensemble, as well as a summer spent as the pianist in Ars Futura, a Cleveland-based ensemble.



## PIANO VARIATIONS NO.1

Nicole Ong

This piece consists of a theme and seven variations. I composed it in 2021, when relaxing and listening to a hymn 'Joyful joyful we adore thee' where Beethoven had composed a simple yet lovely melody. It then inspired me, and as I began to hum, a new melodic line came. In writing this theme and variations, I was also inspired by Mozart's playful and light compositional character, as well as Chopin's beautiful embellishments in the melodic line.

Nicole Ong is currently pursuing her Master Studies in Composition at UCSI University. She graduated with Bachelor (Hons) of Classical Music at UCSI University (Kuala Lumpur) under the tutelage of Yong Sue Yi, Kenneth Teh and Lee Yin Hwa where she majored in classical piano performance.

She enjoys writing choral and orchestra music, as well as writing songs and collaborating with various singers and musicians.

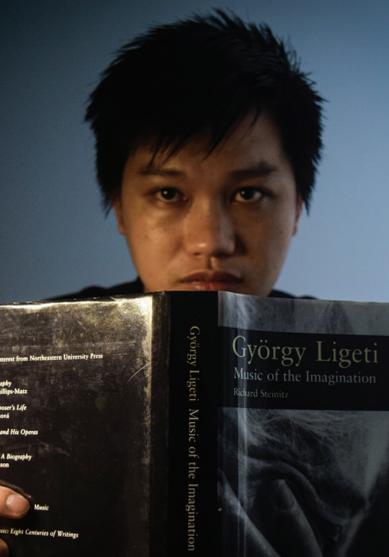


## Chen Jay Hou

Hailing from Pahang, Chen Jay Hou started learning piano at the age of 10 under tutelage of Ng Chong Lim. As a pianist, he earned his Licentiate of Trinity College London (LTCL) in piano performance at the age of 16.

Chen won several prizes at local and international piano competitions, including second prize at Singapore International Piano Competition (2020), second prize at UCSI University International Piano Festival & Competition (2016), and first prize at the 5th ASEAN International Chopin Piano Competition (2012). Chen is currently pursuing Bachelor of Classical Music at UCSI University, majoring in piano under tutelage of Loo Bang Hean.

## SECLUDED VOICE (2022) Rayner Naili



This work depicts the situation in our society or community where people who have authority abuse their power over other people. Power means they can control and give orders, and they have louder voices compared to the 'lesser' community.

A person that abuses his power always has the final say, leaving the voices of powerless people unheard. This is demonstrated in the score where the stronger dynamics (such as forte) are always dominant over the softer dynamics (such as piano) no matter which hand it is played.

Rayner Naili is a Sabahan-born composer and educator. Rayner received his music education at the Faculty of Music of UiTM for his undergraduate studies majoring in music composition and completed his MusM Composition at the University of Manchester, UK. Rayner's works have been performed and workshoped with many professional musicians such as Quartor Danel, Trio Atem, Clare Hammond, etc during his study in the UK. In 2018, Rayner represented Malaysia in the Young Composers Competition at ACL Taiwan.

In 2019, Rayner's work was premiered during Bandung International Art Festival 2019 (BIAF 2019) in Indonesia. In the same year, Rayner collaborated with traditional dancer Agung Gunawan from Indonesia and in the following year wrote for ACL Korea's 'Wave From Seoul' concert in Korea. In 2021, Rayner's work for string sextet was performed by the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra (MPO). Currently, Rayner is teaching music theory and composition at UiTM.

## Lee Ying Jie

Cadis Lee Ying Jie has just graduated from University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign with a DMA in Vocal Coaching and Accompanying. She was the rehearsal pianist and music coach for several opera and musical theatre productions for Lyric Theatre Illinois (LTI).

She also enjoys playing new music and was the rehearsal pianist for *The Surrogate*, a new work by Sky Mcklay. Lee graduated with Bachelor (Hons) of Classical Music at UCSI University (Kuala Lumpur) and she is currently a lecturer at UCSI University.



## TWO MINIATURES (2022)

Fairuz Zamani

Two Miniatures explores the use of the smallest interval on the piano as a compositional material. As this material passes through various harmonic procedures, it offers possibilities of manipulating the material.

No. 1 demonstrates the use of this material as middleground and background, accompanying scale-like and quartal-wise melodies, giving a gloomy, lugubrious atmosphere.

No. 2 expresses this material as the foreground, transforming it across various tonal and character shifts, with the appearance of melodic material from No. 1 at the end of this movement as a tool of reminiscence.

Fairuz Zamani graduated with a PhD in Music Performance from Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, focusing on performing works by a Malaysian composer, Razak Abdul Aziz. He also holds postgraduate degree in musicology and undergraduate degree in music composition from University of Malaya and Universiti Teknologi MARA, respectively.

He also premiered his short song cycle Images (2017) at Kuala Lumpur Performing Arts Centre (KLPA) as part of Malaysian Composer Series 2017 programme.

Currently serving at School of the Arts, Universiti Sains Malaysia as an academic, Fairuz also actively plays with the National Symphony Orchestra of Malaysia as a tutti player. He is also a répétiteur and had worked with several soloists across the globe, as well as local soloists and opera productions.



## Yee Ke-Jin

Yee Ke-Jin is a pianist, cellist and conductor. Currently pursuing an undergraduate degree in piano performance at UCSI University Institute of Music on partial scholarship, he studies piano with Professor Dr P'ng Tean Hwa.

He has also been coached by Professor Peter Takács and Ng Chong Lim. He previously attended Newington College in Sydney, Australia as recipient of the Robert Walter Storr Music Scholarship. He holds an ATCL diploma in piano performance and an AMEB Certificate of Performance in cello performance.

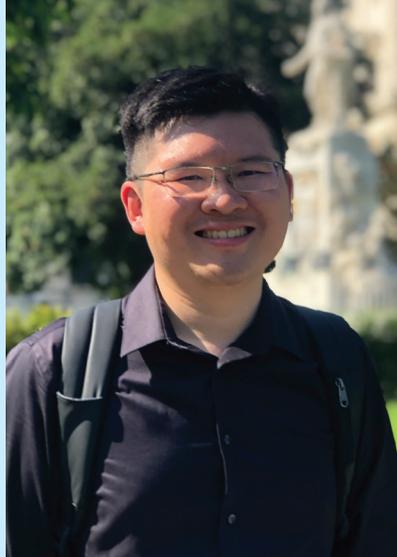
## CONTEMPLATION (2022)

Chan Wei Tuck

Contemplation represents thoughts that are interspersed throughout the work. This work depicts the point of time where one considers the available opportunities and the path to take.

Chan Wei Tuck earned his Bachelors, Masters, and Doctor of Musical Arts degrees in piano performance from West Virginia University. His principal piano teachers were among others, Lee Yin Hwa. He also attended masterclasses by Ng Chong Lim and others.

In 2019, Intrigue for piano was awarded Third Degree Diploma in the Golden Key Piano Composition Competition 2019 - International Professional category and was premiered in Vienna, Austria. In the same year, Raindrop for piano was premiered at the Pensacola ComposerFest XV in Florida, USA. In 2018, three pieces for violin and piano titled Reunion, Reflection, and Romance was premiered at Dewan Filharmonik Petronas, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.



## Maxy Chan Mei Xuan

Maxy Chan became the first Malaysian to win gold awards at the prestigious 2013 and 2014 Asia Piano Competition in Taiwan and South Korea respectively. She had obtained her ATCL (2010), LTCL (2012), and FTCL (2014) diplomas in piano performance from Trinity College, London.

She has appeared at numerous festivals such as the 10th Penang Island Jazz Festival, 3rd Euroasia Youth Music Festival and many others.

Chan presented a lecture recital at UCSI Piano Pedagogy Conference 2017 on Performance Perspectives on Ng Chong Lim's 'A Distant Voice of the Rain Forest' at UCSI University. She graduated from UCSI University with Bachelor of Classical Music (Hons) in 2019.



## TURNING INTO STARS (2021)

Tai Yun Ming

This piece is dedicated to my grandmother and late grandfather. Death had separated them when they were newlyweds, while my grandmother was carrying a child. She was strong against grief, alone in raising my mother.

I wonder how she dealt with the pain, emotionally and even physically, as she had suffered injuries from the overloaded farming works she had taken over since my grandfather's passing. She is a reminder of love and strength to me, now and forever.

Tai Yun Ming is a Malaysian student composer at Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music, Singapore. She has collaborated with film and video game makers, visual artists and dancers, and is often inspired by the different disciplines of art.

Her works were featured in In Your Hands 2022 dance/theatre show at the Esplanade, Singapore, selected for Arts and Science Days 2020 @ Saint Etienne, Hot Air Music Festival 2021, SiMN 2021 and Red Jasper Award 2022.

She also won first prize in Chopin Society Malaysia's Virtual International Music Competition 2020 (composition) and have written for the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra (MPO).

## Chee Su-yen

A graduate of the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts and Indiana University (Bloomington), Chee has established herself both as a soloist and chamber musician.

She has given many solo performances both locally and abroad, and is also in demand as an accompanist, working extensively with both instrumentalists and singers.

Besides performing, she dedicates her time to teaching. Her students have won prizes in local and regional competitions. She is also sought after as an adjudicator.

Currently, Chee is an adjunct lecturer at UCSI University, ASWARA and maintains a private studio.



## FOUR BAGATELLES (2022)

Johan Othman

The Four Bagatelles are short piano works that are based on a revised version of three earlier piano Bagatelles. The fourth Bagatelle is a new piece added. The idea of these Bagatelles can also be associated with the eastern concept of impermanence or something that lasts only within a fleeting moment.

These small piano pieces that lasts for a brief moment, particularly the third Bagatelle, are intended to illustrate the general eastern idea of impermanence using the Western or European musical language or idioms. In other words, to use the speech of the Other to speak for the Self.

Johan Othman majored in composition at Oberlin Conservatory of Music, and in 1999 graduated from Yale University with a Masters of Music in composition. He received his PhD in Art History and Theory from Universiti Sains Malaysia in 2015, where he teaches music.

He has composed for orchestra and chamber groups, and written Malaysia's first opera The Conference of the Birds and music for numerous theatre productions. His music has been performed in the US, Germany, Taiwan and in Malaysia, among others.



## Ho Su Han

Ho Su Han is currently a lecturer at the UCSI Institute of Music where she also serves as the coordinator of its chamber music ensemble. Ho graduated from the Cleveland Institute of Music, with a DMA in Collaborative Piano.

A native of Johor, she previously obtained her BMus in Piano Performance and Pedagogy from the Universiti Sains Malaysia, and continued her graduate studies at the University of Houston graduating with the degree of MM in Collaborative Piano.

She has participated in various music festivals, and her interest in new music has led her into numerous performances with AURA Contemporary Ensemble in Houston, CIM New Music Ensemble, as well as a summer spent as the pianist in Ars Futura, a Cleveland-based ensemble.



## ARRHYTHMIA (2022) Jessica Cho

Arrhythmia is a study in fast polyrhythms for piano solo. The entire piece was composed based on one pitch class set and its variations. The challenges for this piece are mainly to strengthen players' consistency in handling tricky articulations and co-ordinations of playing different syncopated rhythms in both hands simultaneously.

This study is called Arrhythmia because it arouses the feeling of irregular heart rhythm. Having arrhythmia means you may feel like your heart skipped a beat, added a beat or is fluttering. It might feel too fast or too slow.

Composer-pianist Jessica Cho received her Bachelor of Music at Middlesex University, London, majoring in piano performance and her Masters of Music at University of Sheffield as a research student on composition and modern repertoire for piano. Her compositions have been premiered and performed worldwide including United Kingdom, Vienna, Japan, Taiwan, Singapore and Malaysia.

Cho was the first from her country to win a prize at the Asian Composers League young composers competition in Taiwan in 2012. She also pioneered Malaysia's first CD album of women composers 'Interweaves' in 2016. Her piano piece Capricious was published this year by Schott Music, Germany.

## Tian Zi Yan

20-year-old Tian Zi Yan started her musical journey at the age of 10, playing both the piano and the violin. She was awarded first prize at the 2017 International Music Competition 'Rome' Grand Prize Virtuoso and was a finalist at the 2019 Putra International Piano Competition Piano Concerto & Piano Solo. She also received masterclasses conducted by Professor Danica Stoyanova in conjunction with the 4th International Festival of Classical Music (2016) organized by Persatuan Chopin Malaysia.

Recently, Tian passed her Licentiate of Trinity College London (LTCL) in Piano Performance with distinction. She is currently a scholarship recipient at UCSI University, pursuing her degree in classical music.





## SAD FACT (2021) Zhiyong Tan

In most of my compositions, I think about the interaction between the music and the audience. In this piece, I focus on the experience of the performer. There are some compositional ideas that only the performer him/ herself knows.

The work is called "Sad Fact" because it is about some common disorder people today "claim" to have. There is choice phobia disorder, insomnia, and obsessive-compulsive disorder. To clarify, these disorders could be serious for some people and should be treated correctly. However, many people claim to have these disorders only because it makes them feel comfortable. The idea of this piece is to "cure" the performer who has these disorders or to have them experience my treatment for these disorders in a rather funny way.

ZhiYong Tan is a composer, arranger, and producer, currently studying music composition in West Chester University of Pennsylvania. He enjoys writing instrumental music, electronic music, vocal works, and songs. Tan believes that music can not only carry emotion, but also information. Therefore, his compositions often express issues such as environmental issues, social issues like racism, psychological disorders and more.

Tan's compositions have been performed in the US and Malaysia. He has received commissions for new compositions and arrangement for solo, chamber, and orchestra. His awards include 2021 Pennsylvania Chamber Winds Call for Score, 2021 Kyle Pearl 2nd Annual Open Call for cello solo and 2021 UITM Tunku Zain Piano Trio Composition Competition.



## Asst. Prof. Ysan Suit Yin

*Sad Fact - Zzzz*

Born in Kuala Lumpur, Assistant Professor Ysan Suit Yin is the Head of the Classical Music Degree at the Institute of Music at UCSI University in Kuala Lumpur, a very dedicated teacher and has been actively teaching since 1986.

She was one of the first in South-East Asia to be awarded the Fellowship of the Royal Schools of Music (Music in Education) by the Royal School of Music. Ysan received a partial bursary for the Master Degree in Performance London College of Music (LCM).

She has been invited to judge many piano competitions such as the International Music Society Piano Competition, and is one of the regular judges for UCSI International Piano Festival and Competition.

## Esther Grace Fanggara

*Sad Fact - Noooo!!!*

Esther Grace Fanggara, a classical pianist, was born in Medan, Indonesia. From her young age, she had intensive masterclasses with Prof Boris Kraljevic. Esther won her first Silver award in 4th Singapore Performers' Festival and she was also the 3rd Prize winner in The Asia Piano Competition (Both Asia works and Professional children category) in 2012.

She was also the 1st prize winner at Veranza Piano Competition 2017 and La Pianista Competition 2018. Currently, at her age of 20, she is pursuing her final year of Bachelor Degree of Classical Music under the tutelage of Asst. Prof. Ysan Suit Yin.



# Music of Modern Malaysia & Mussorgsky

*A recital by pianist Melody Quah,  
with guest trombonist, Lance Low*

7 July 2022, 8:00pm

Recital Hall

Block G, LG Floor

UCSI University

Kuala Lumpur Campus



Lance Low, bass trombone  
Oulu Symphony Orchestra, Finland  
Winner, Malaysian Wind Music Prize 2021



Partners



THE RONDO PRODUCTION



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Set up in 2007, Malaysian Composers Collective (Persatuan Komposer Kolektif, MCC) has been the leading force in promoting Malaysian composers at home and abroad over the past dozen years. As the member organisation in the Asian Composers League (ACL) representing Malaysia.

MCC also sends our young composers to represent Malaysia at the Young Composers Competitions at the ACL festivals around the region every 18 months. We are proud to say two of our young talents have made history by winning prizes at the festivals, after the country's absence from the league of nearly two decades.

MCC has pioneered a series of milestone initiatives, including the nation's first Young Composers Workshop with HSBC Bank (2008), its 1st ever new music festival the KL Contemporary Music Festival 2009 with Goethe Institut, and two CDs of Malaysian composers, among others.

Following Free Hand Festival 2019, MCC chalked another first by publishing the scores of the pieces performed and several other piano works into an anthology with Faber Music, available at music stores worldwide for pianists and music lovers to play or study.

It has worked with numerous partners and sponsors such as HSBC Bank, The Edge, Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra, UCSI University, Yayasan Sime Darby, Cendana Arts Fund and government institutions and premiered over a hundred new Malaysian works over the past decade.

[www.malaysiancomposers.com](http://www.malaysiancomposers.com)



# THANK YOU

2nd Malaysian Contemporary Composers Piano Festival

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Datin Christine Woo

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## FESTIVAL COMMITTEE

Adeline Wong (Festival Director)

Jessica Cho (Assistant Director)

CH Loh

Fairuz Zamani

Hardesh Singh

## DOCUMENTATION & ARCHIVING

Eddy Izuwan Musa

Howard Tai Khai Shen

## SPECIAL THANKS TO

Prof. Dr. P'ng Tean Hwa, Director, UCSI Institute of Music  
Asst. Prof. Dr. Christine Tan Yunn Bing, Chairperson IPFC 2022

Ng Chong Lim

Dr. Andrew Filmer

Dorothy Kay Yen Sin, Event Co-ordinator

